

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Socialist meatpackers,  
farm activists meet

— PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Farmers build marches 'for justice' and land

BY SUSAN LAMONT  
AND STEPHEN BLOODWORTH

BIRMINGHAM—"The reason why a lot of farmers want to go to Atlanta is because they haven't received any debt relief or money, or have been outright turned down. They won't get any debt relief under the consent decree. They want justice and that's why we're going back to D.C. on February 28," said David Howard, a cotton and soy bean farmer from Tchula, Mississippi, and president of the Mileston Cooperative.

"We've been out here farming all our lives. Now we can't get money from the Farm Services Administration (FSA) or the banks. We're being frozen out."

Farmers and their supporters stepped up activities this week to build the January 17 march in Atlanta. They are looking toward another rally called for Washington, D.C., February 28, in their continued fight to defend their land and ability to farm.

The Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA), which is sponsoring the march, issued a flyer outlining a day of activities including a breakfast, press conference, march, and rally as part of the Martin Luther King Day events in Atlanta.

Black farmers in the rural area northeast of Memphis are fighting to get out the truth about a growing scandal. It involves the federal government's actions around the March 1999 settlement of the lawsuit against discrimination by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Some are members of Concerned Black Farmers and the Tennessee BFAA. They raise cotton, soybeans, and corn, and some also raise cattle.

These toilers have fought together for many years to defend the right of Black farmers to keep their land and for equal access to govern-



Farmers rally in Washington, D.C., March 2, 1999, to demand, "We want our land back."

ment loans, disaster relief, and other programs.

In 1982, some of them occupied the Farmers Home Administration offices in nearby Covington, Tennessee, for 21 days to protest

the unequal treatment faced by Black farmers. Most recently, they participated in the December 13 rally in Washington, D.C., to

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## Rally scores racist killing in Sweden

BY ANITA ÖSTLING

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—"I came here to show my respect and how much I detest the killing. I'm convinced it was a racist act," said Mikail Canatan, one of 400 people who protested in the city center here January 6 in response to the murder of Salih Uzel, a 19-year-old man of Turkish descent. Uzel was stabbed to death on New Year's Eve.

Two racist skinheads, well known for harassing immigrants, have been arrested.

Uzel lived in Skogås, a large Turkish community in a suburb east of here. Salih's father, Ömar, said that after a New Year's Eve gathering, his eldest son, along with his wife and two-year-old child, left for their home a few blocks away.

"They ran into a group of 15 to 18 people who started abusing them, hitting the baby carriage, and kicking and beating him. The son took the first blows in order to get his wife and child out of there, then ran while calling us for help on the cellular phone," said Ömar.

The situation was tense when the family members arrived and some heated exchanges took place. The group was armed with long knives and batons, and the women had tear

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## Steelworkers stand up to company firings in contract battle at Ormet

BY CHRIS REMPLE

HANNIBAL, Ohio—"No 12s, No 10s, Just 8s," reads a sign put up by United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 5760 at Ormet

Aluminum's rolling mill here in response to the company's attempts to impose 10- and 12-hour shifts.

The 1,800 USWA members at Ormet continue to fight for a contract in face of company firings of union activists. Since May when their last contract expired, the union has opted not to strike. Workers are organizing daily informational picketing at shift changes and marching into and out of the plant. Union members also organize regular Friday breakfasts and Wednesday evening picnics at the picket

shacks.

The two locals gave big concessions in 1986, including a wage cut, giving up the cost of living allowance (COLA), and reductions in vacation time and insurance benefits. Local 5760 represents 600 workers at the rolling mill and Local 5724 includes 1,200 workers in the reduction mill. They are demanding a return of a COLA of \$1.18, which the company has refused.

In early December the company put a new

Continued on Page 5

## UMWA fights closing of mine in Nova Scotia

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

MONTREAL—Five hundred coal miners went on strike January 3 against the last remaining mine operating in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The Prince mine is owned by Devco, a government-owned Crown corporation.

Union member Jim Noble said the walkout

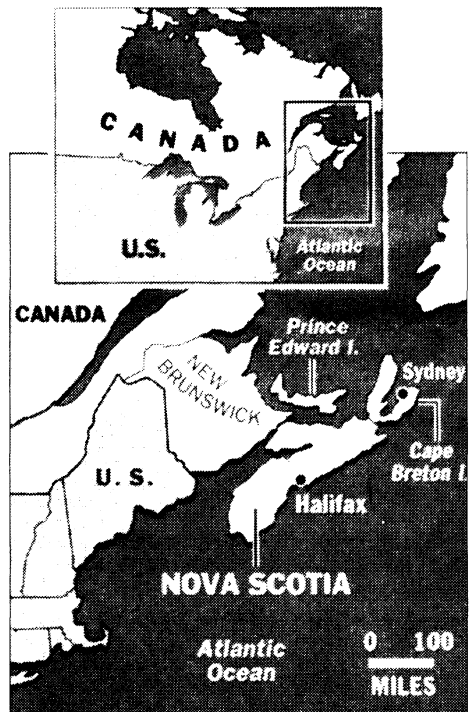
reflects "the total frustration of the miners of Cape Breton" arising from a decision by the federal government to get out of the coal-mining business. Devco closed down the Phalen mine last month. About 1,100 Devco employees are expected to lose their jobs as the Crown outfit shuts down.

The workers at the Prince mine, members of the United Mine Workers of America, are angry over the deal being offered by Ottawa. Many older workers have 20 to 25 years of experience but will receive only severance pay and no pension. The strike has spread to other company sites. Devco was granted a back-to-work order by the Canada Industrial Relations Board, but workers have ignored it.

A week into the strike, 10 miners blockaded themselves at the bottom of the mine vowing to remain there until they are certain that there will be more money from the government for them and their families. "We're proud of our husbands that are down there and we're glad that they are standing up for their rights," said Kathy Baker. "We're behind our husbands 100 percent because we got nowhere to go." The area has been hard hit by the crisis of the fishing industry and massive cuts in unemployment benefits.

As we go to press, union officials are meeting with government officials in Ottawa.

Michel Dugré is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

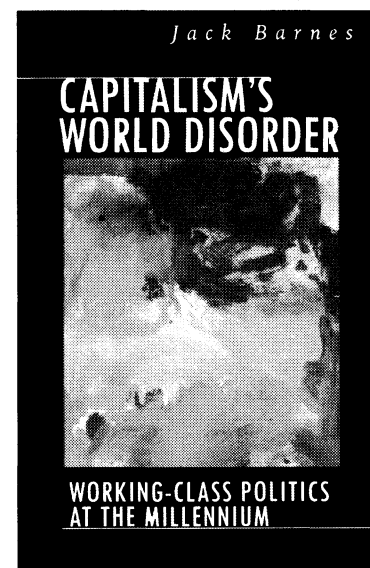


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**Cuban youth build student conference in Havana — page 4**

# King Day actions set to demand U.S. Navy get out of Vieques

BY PATTIE THOMPSON

CHICAGO—The Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques has issued a call, inviting “churches, artists, unions, political parties, and a wide range of civil and social organizations to join us to reaffirm the will of the people of Vieques—the demilitarization, decontamination, return of the lands, and development for the island municipality [Vieques].” They are organizing a march and rally on Vieques to be held as part of Martin Luther King Day celebrations January 17.

Hundreds of people joined picket lines at the chained gate of the U.S. Navy’s Camp García and at several beach camps on the island of Vieques to bring in New Year’s Day. The mobilization marked 257 days since the U.S. government stopped live-fire bombardment of the island.

The protesters “left their families to be with us, which shows their commitment and solidarity to the cause of Vieques,” said Nilda Medina of the Coordinating Committee for Justice and Peace in Vieques.

Fishermen took most of the day to ferry the delegations by boat to the restricted zones of the U.S. firing range. Fighters demanding the United States leave the island have maintained encampments there since last April which, along with protests and demonstrations mobilizing tens of thousands, have prevented Washington from restarting its full-scale military training exercises. The protests were sparked by the death of a civilian base worker last April by a bomb dropped by U.S. forces.

Since the 1940s, U.S. naval battle groups have used the island as an essential part of military preparedness. Top military personnel in the Navy and Marines have warned of lack of battle readiness if they are not able to continue to bomb Vieques. The USS Eisenhower aircraft carrier naval group, for example, will carry out its live fire training on an island off the coast of Scotland instead.

## Government workers fund inquiry

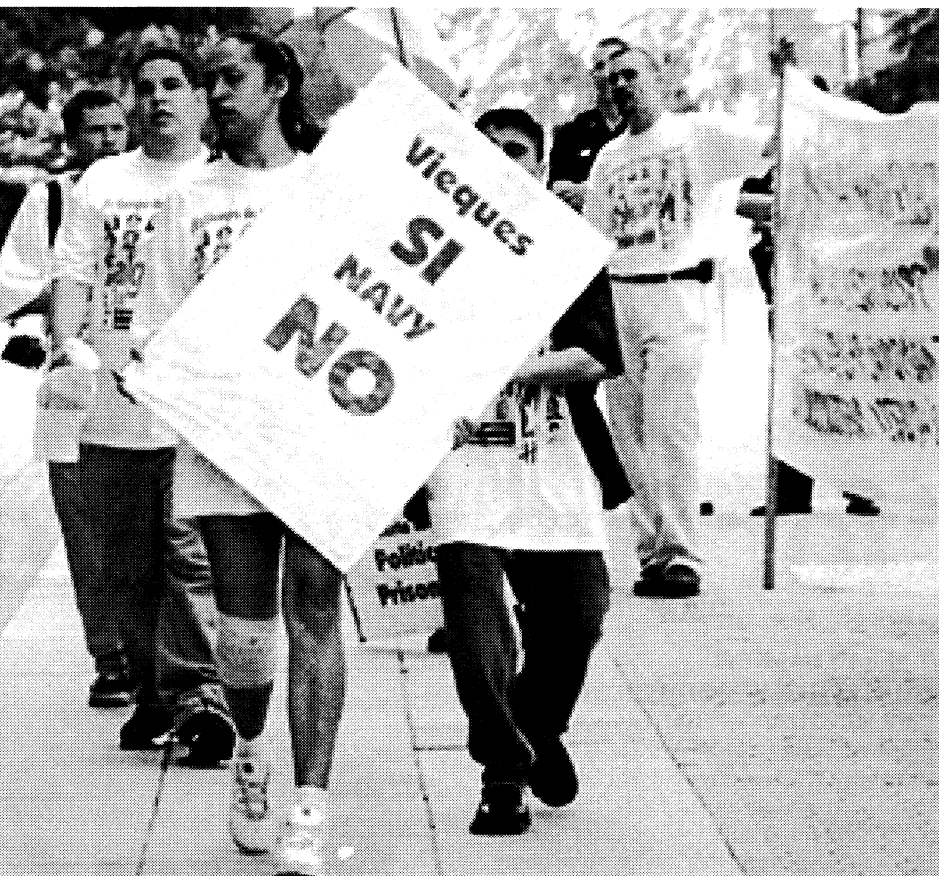
Another indication of continuing broad support came from the Association of Retired Government Workers of Puerto Rico, who presented a donation of \$10,000 to the mayor of

Vieques January 4. The fund was raised by workers contributing \$2 each and is dedicated to finding out the reason for the high cancer rates of Vieques residents. The U.S. military admits to a series of violations of federal and local environmental regulations but nothing has been done about it to date.

In addition, the fight continues against the government’s use of police forces in spying and disrupting organizations that oppose the U.S. colonial policies in Puerto Rico. On January 7, the National Hostos Congress demanded the governor reopen unsolved cases of violent acts against independence organizations committed in the 1970s and 1980s, including the 1975 bombing that killed two people and injured dozens at a rally commemorating the birth of independence hero Eugenio María de Hostos.

The pro-independence newspaper *Claridad* recently reprinted an article from 1987 to “help refresh the memory” of the governor and others of the police actions against the labor movement. One example included was testimony to a 1987 Puerto Rican Senate hearing where a cop described obeying orders to sabotage properties of the Electrical Energy Authority while undercover in the Union of Electrical Workers so that crime could be attributed to the union.

Meanwhile, the resident commissioner, Carlos Romero Barceló, the nonvoting Puerto Rican representative to the U.S. Congress, testified at hearings of the House Committee on Government Reform in Miami. He was called by Chairman Dan Burton as part of a smear campaign against Puerto Rican independence fighters and the Cuban revolution based on a story that a Cuban agent directed the activities of a Puerto Rican organization and funneled money to Cuba from bank heists and drug trafficking in the Caribbean.



Militant/Stu Singer

Thirty people picketed outside a government hearing in Arlington, Virginia, July 23, 1999, in protest of the U.S. Navy presence in Vieques, Puerto Rico.

Barceló followed up this slander by urging

increased federal funding for the “war on drugs” in Puerto Rico. He praised the federal installation of a new “anti-drug trafficking super radar” on Vieques that is to begin operation in the next two months as well as the recent recruitment of 6,000 more cops.

Pattie Thompson is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1487 at O’Hare Airport.

## Florida limits legal steps by death row inmates

BY RACHELE FRUIT

MIAMI—In special session on the death penalty, Florida Democratic and Republican legislators voted to shorten the time between a death sentence and execution to no longer than five years.

The legislators also moved to allow the state to execute with lethal injection those prisoners who are convicted of murder. Governor Jeb Bush indicated he will rapidly sign these bills into law.

After the bloody death of Allen Davis in Florida’s electric chair last July, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to decide whether electrocution is constitutional. Only Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Nebraska use the electric chair as the sole means of execution. To insure executions continue uninterrupted, the legislators passed the lethal injection bill nearly unanimously.

The appeals bill limits the number of trips prisoners can make to the state courts and sets shorter, stricter deadlines for filing appeals. The bill also bars second appeals unless prisoners can prove a constitutional violation, such as the withholding of evidence, or unless they have evidence of their innocence.

Florida has been forced to free 20 prisoners from death row because of questions about their guilt, more than any state in the nation. Last year, the state Supreme Court found fault with three-quarters of all death sentences it reviewed.

Two proposed amendments were set aside with the promise to take them up at some other time. One was to ban the execution of the mentally retarded, the other to allow a prisoner to appeal if he could prove racial bias in the prosecutor’s decision to seek the death penalty.

Freddie Pitts listened to the debate on the race-based appeals amendment from the gallery of the Senate and said, “The debate should be on ending capital punishment altogether.”

Pitts, along with codefendant Wilbert Lee, spent nine years on Florida’s Death Row for two murders that they did not commit.

“After listening to this for the last two days, I am glad that I’m not on Death Row right now, because I’d be history,” Pitts told legislators. “The problem with eroding constitutional protections for political expediency is that one of these days you may be on the other side of the law,” he said. “That’s when you’ll feel the frustration and the helplessness of trying to prove that you should be treated better by the law.”

Pitts said he has lost count of the trips he has made to Tallahassee over the years. Last March he testified before the Massachusetts legislature, which was considering bringing back the death penalty there. That proposal was defeated.

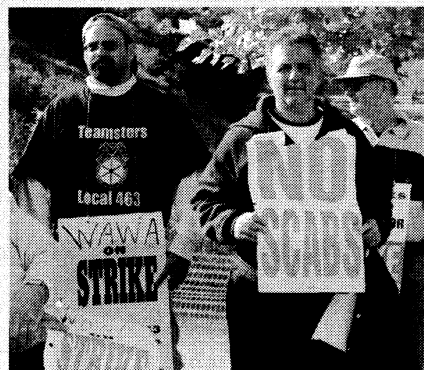
“I don’t know of anything else more important right now,” Pitts said. “It’s something I feel that I’ve got to do.”

Rachele Fruit is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

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Editor: NAOMI CRAINE

Young Socialists column editor: CECILIA ORTEGA

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Brian Taylor, and Maurice Williams.

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# Working dairy farmers in Australia face ruin as companies drive down prices

BY DOUG COOPER

SYDNEY, Australia—Thousands of dairy farmers in the state of Victoria, which dominates the milk industry with 63 percent of total production, voted by mail in December in a nonbinding plebiscite on deregulation of the price they receive for their fresh milk. A reported 89 percent voted to accept the federal government's eight-year A\$1.8 billion (A\$1 = US 66 cents) "compensation" package. The package is scheduled to take effect on July 1, provided all state governments agree to deregulation. Working people will pay for the proposed package through an 11 cents per liter tax built into the retail price of milk.

Dairy farm organization leaders negotiated the deal with the federal government in the face of a relentless push for deregulation by Victorian-based major dairy product manufacturers Murray-Goulburn Cooperative Co. and Bonlac Foods, along with the conservative state government of Premier Jeffrey Kennett.

The plebiscite had been promised by then Victorian state opposition leader, and now premier, Steven Bracks. Bracks scored a surprise upset over Kennett, the country's most prominent conservative politician after Prime Minister John Howard.

In an indication of growing ferment, thousands of people in rural and regional areas, who usually vote Liberal or National, swung to the Labor Party. Kennett's loss was finally sealed in an October 16 by-election, which brought Labor into government with Independent support after seven years of conservative rule. Bracks welcomed the outcome of the plebiscite, saying it would bring "certainty" to the industry.

Dairy farms in Australia are overwhelmingly operated by families who rely on little or no outside labor. Some 80 percent of milk

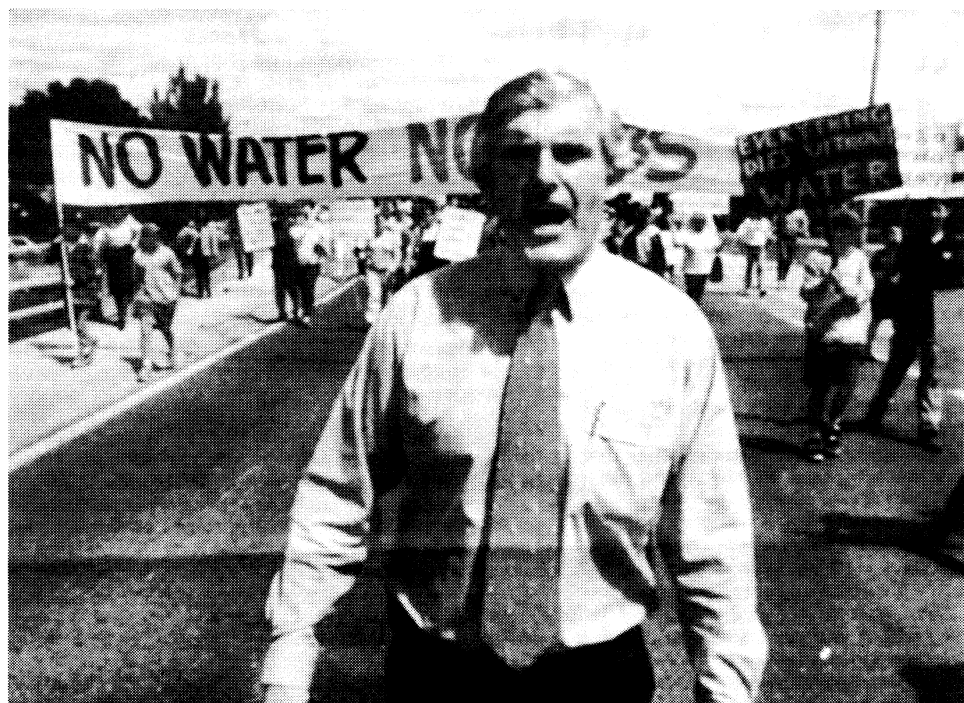
production ends up as dairy products, most of which are exported, in particular to Japan and Southeast Asia.

The dairy industry is the country's third largest rural industry, after beef and wheat production. Milk production has doubled over the last decade to over 10 billion liters in 1998-99. The number dairy farms has fallen from 30,000 in 1975 to 13,500 today. The average farm has doubled in size since the 1980s to 180 hectares (445 acres) as has the average number of cows to 149.

Ten public meetings called by the New South Wales Dairy Farmers Association (DFA) to discuss deregulation were held around the state from late October to late November. Farmers came to find out what the package consists of, to assess whether their counterparts in Victoria would vote in favor of deregulation thus triggering it nationally, and what effect it would have on their ability to remain on the land.

DFA leaders told the meetings that the average payout, to compensate farmers in New South Wales (NSW) for an expected drop in prices they receive for their milk once deregulation occurs, would be A\$192,000 spread out in 32 quarterly payments over eight years. This figure is based on 1998-99 average production figures of 700,000 liters. According to DFA executive director Winston Watts, the average NSW farmer would be A\$17,855 worse off per year with deregulation.

Robert Worth, a dairy farmer who leases some 200 hectares in the Cessnock area, said at the Singleton meeting if deregulation happens, "It won't be worthwhile to continue [milking]." Worth estimates that he would receive A\$300 per quarter in compensation. "This won't even pay the fuel bills, let alone help pay the costs of production, rent, and the rest." Worth also noted that if a lot of



Oct. 19, 1999, protest of 3,500 farmers and supporters in Albury, New South Wales, demanding cheaper prices for irrigation water.

farmers are forced to leave the land then the market price of cows will drop.

DFA president Reg Smith told the meetings that the 52 cents per liter paid under regulation in NSW would be expected to drop to at best 40 cents per liter. The compensation package was based on that expected price drop. Smith asserted there would be no net increase in the retail price of fresh milk. However, many farmers were openly skeptical that the price to them would fall only 12-13 cents per liter.

In reply, Smith told the Penrith meeting near Sydney, "There won't be 1,800 dairy farmers in New South Wales" after deregulation.

There may be 1,200 or 1,000, but they'll be big, profitable producers," he said. Peter, a small dairyman from near Sydney, responded that the milk processing giants "want to get rid of all small farmers."

Estimates by the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria (UDV), the DFA's counterpart and like it a supporter of deregulation, are that at least 3,000 small dairy farmers will go under out of 8,000 in the state as a result of deregulation.

Dave Rootsey, a dairy farmer with 450 cows on 270 hectares near Berrigan, attended the Deniliquin meeting to oppose deregulation. He told the *Militant*, "Consumers won't get cheaper milk.... Retailers will increase their profit margin" if deregulation is pushed through. "I'll be \$120,000 a year worse off after the package."

Access to water is a vital political issue in this region, known as the Riverina, near the Victorian border. Without irrigation, rice cultivation as well as dairying in the Murray Valley would cease. The area produces half the annual rice crop in the country and 20 percent of milk in NSW. Rootsey noted, "Three years ago I paid a \$12,000 annual water bill. Today it's \$40,000."

Yet water is not scarce behind the dams in the nearby Snowy Mountains. "The Hume Dam is at 60 percent capacity. The Dartmouth is at 50 percent. It doesn't add up," said John Cartwright, another Berrigan dairyman opposed to deregulation. The issue is how much those needing irrigation water should be expected to pay and whether it will come from more than 1 million megaliters of surplus water behind Snowy dams, being held for hydroelectric power generation by privately owned power companies. A series of large protest meetings and rallies on irrigation occurred in October in the Murray Valley region. They culminated in a protest march in Albury of 3,500 farmers and their supporters on October 19.

Graeme Spinner, another Berrigan dairy farmer, said in an interview that "99 percent don't want deregulation here.... All the winners will be the multinationals and food retailers."

Rusty Prosser, a dairy farmer from Hardin, NSW, said in a January 2 phone interview that he wasn't surprised at the outcome of the Victorian vote. "Dairy farmers in Victoria are hurting. They voted to accept the package" to get some financial relief, "not for deregulation." According to Prosser, deregulation is by no means inevitable, at least not in the short term.

Efforts by dairy farmers to win support for their right to produce on the land may yet prove decisive in pushing back the Big Three milk processors—National Foods, Dairy Farmers, and Parmalat/Pauls; the two giant national food retail chains, Coles and Woolworths, as well as Murray-Goulburn and Bonlac; as they all push to lower costs and maintain profit rates at the expense of small farmers.

Doug Cooper is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia in Sydney. Ron Poulsen contributed to this article.

## BC Rail workers stand up to lockout

BY STEVE PETERS

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—BC Rail, Canada's third largest railway, lifted a nine-day lockout of 1,600 workers in British Columbia on January 5 after union officials agreed to a tentative contract agreement. The company failed to achieve most of the major concessions that it had been seeking. Union members will be voting on the contract proposal in a mail-in ballot between now and February 4.

The workers, who had been without a contract for the last two years, voted 84 percent to reject the employer's concession demands. They were locked out December 27 after union officials gave the company 72 hours strike notice on Christmas eve.

BC Rail had been demanding a 20 percent reduction in the unionized work force through contracting out jobs, lengthening the workday for many workers—especially in

the running trades—from 10 to 12 hours, and reducing the size of passenger train crews. The company had also hoped to impose a lower wage scale for new employees, who would start at 80 percent of the wages of other workers. It would take almost two years before they would be paid the same.

The company was unable to win agreement for any of these concessions. However, union officials did agree that the company's demands would be submitted to nonbinding arbitration.

Union officials also agreed to a 2 percent wage increase without any retroactive pay for the two years rail workers have been without a contract.

Mike Horn, a train engineer, pointed out that rail workers' wages have been held below the rising cost of living for at least the last decade. He explained why workers were

determined to resist the company's demands.

"We fought for years to win" what BC Rail is now trying to take away, he said. "If we give up any of these things now it will take years to win them back. That's the trouble when you start to go down that concessions road."

Jerry McBride, also an engineer, explained that workers were concerned, not only about the threat of substantial job losses, but also about the further deterioration of unsafe working conditions.

"It's already a dangerous place to work" as a result of sharp reductions in train crews, he pointed out. Crew size on freight trains has been cut from five in 1986 to two today. The company is pushing to also cut the size of crews on passenger trains, to lengthen hours, and reduce rest periods between runs.

When the lockout first began, union officials didn't organize any picketing. However, the officials' attempt to negotiate an agreement that included some of the concessions demanded by the company was vetoed by BC Rail. This led to a sharp reaction from many union members who were determined to fight the concessions.

Twenty-four hour picketing was organized along with several pickets that shut down Vancouver Wharves and Roberts Bank, key port facilities that are subsidiaries of BC Rail. Longshoremen, who were themselves locked out in November, refused to cross the rail workers' picket lines. The unions also organized a demonstration of about 75 rail workers at BC Rail's head office in Vancouver.

The company obtained a court injunction prohibiting further picketing of the wharves while union officials agreed to end picketing at Roberts Bank.

As it became clear that BC Rail was unlikely to win the substantial concessions it had been demanding without a lengthy strike, pressure built up for an end to the lockout, especially from the forest industry which makes up at least half of the rail company's shipments.

BC Rail then decided to drop most of its concession demands for the time being, hoping to win them through the arbitration process and in the next set of contract negotiations. The new contract will expire at the end of this year.

## UAW wins strike against Terex

BY RAY PARSONS

DES MOINES, Iowa—United Auto Workers (UAW) strikers at Terex Crane in Waverly, Iowa, voted to accept a new contract January 7 by a 77 percent margin, ending a walkout that began a month earlier. Terex Corp., a major manufacturer of mining and construction equipment, produces mobile work platforms and cranes at the plant.

UAW Local 411 members were determined to wrest higher wages, improved pension benefits, and controls on health care costs from Terex bosses, rejecting three contract offers by overwhelming margins. "We've done real well," said striker Charles Murray. "We had a lot of solidarity. The strike brought us workers closer together."

The new pact includes wage increases

of at least 70 cents per hour in each year of the five-year contract. The unionists won a "30 and out" pension plan, where workers will now be able to retire at age 55 with 30 years of service. Monthly pension benefits will jump to \$30 per year of service and increase to \$37 by the end of the agreement.

Earlier company demands to change work rules to allow bosses to move workers from their regular jobs merely for missing time from work was dropped by Terex in face of firm opposition by union members.

Ron Rudebeck is an assembler with 27 years at Terex who also farms corn and soybeans with his brother. While he thought the union could have gotten even more by staying out longer, he is pleased with the contract. He expects a new speedup drive by Terex bosses once strikers return to work.

"We found out what solidarity can do," Rudebeck said. "The company knows they can only go so far. Our first day back should be very, very interesting."

Ray Parsons is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 310 in Des Moines.



# YS eyes recruitment at New Jersey campus

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, CA 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429.

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BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

NEWARK, New Jersey — The Young Socialists chapter here is taking advantage of the fact that one of its members, Bobbilyn Negrón, is a student at Rutgers University in Newark. We are using the opportunity this presents for us to shift the center of our political work to the campus in order to recruit other students

who want to fight for socialism.

Since the beginning of last semester, we have been setting up weekly—and sometimes biweekly—literature tables on campus with members of the Socialist Workers Party. Steady political work at Rutgers is at the heart of building the YS in Newark.

Last October, we organized a meeting for Martín Koppel, the editor of the Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*. Koppel spoke on the fight for Puerto Rican independence, and on his recent visit to Puerto Rico and to the island of Vieques. Four student groups co-sponsored the event, including the Puerto Rican Organization and the Organization of Black Students. Ten Rutgers students attended the meeting.

Following up on that meeting, we helped sponsor a speaking engagement for Norberto Codina, a Cuban poet and editor of *La Gaceta de Cuba*. Five student groups, ranging from the English Graduate Student Association to Latino United Association, as well as several professors, sponsored the event. Some 70 students packed the art gallery where the meeting was located. After Codina's talk, a lively political discussion ensued.

The YS has a noticeable political presence on campus, and the work we do at Rutgers is the axis of our weekly political rhythm. "Doing political work on campus gives me a new perspective on campus life," explained Negrón. "I look forward to going to campus because I see the opportunities to build the YS there through meetings and tables."

Members of the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party have sold two copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* at literature tables at Rutgers. In addition, several Rutgers students attend Militant Labor Forums and classes on *Capitalism's World Disorder* at the

local Pathfinder bookstore.

We plan on sponsoring a class series on campus next semester on *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*. This idea comes out of the real interest in learning the truth about the Cuban revolution expressed by many of our contacts. We will also use these classes, in addition to our steady sales efforts, to build an East Coast regional socialist educational conference at Rutgers on women's liberation at the end of February.

"The work the party and YS have done on campus gave me a better definition of who we are," Negrón said. "When I first came into contact with party members at a literature table on campus last October, I wondered where they came from. But now I know the background and how much importance there is in doing political work on campus, so we can recruit other students, like me."

Olympia Newton is the YS Northeast regional organizer.

# Cuban communist youth leaders build student congress in Havana

BY SAMANTHA KERN

SAN FRANCISCO—Leaders of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) have been touring the Americas the last four months building a Latin America and Caribbean students congress in Havana, Cuba.

The April 1-4 meeting is open to all students and youth organizations interested in defending the rights of students and fighting imperialism. "We have gotten a good response in all 28 countries we have visited," said Juan Carlos Frómeta, the UJC's director of the Department of International Relations in a phone interview.

The UJC is hosting the conference of the Continental Latin America and Caribbean Students Organization (OCLAE), which was established more than 30 years ago by numerous youth and student organizations in order to join forces and better organize the fight against a common enemy, U.S. imperialism.

Some of the places UJC leaders have toured are Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, and Canada. "We plan on organizing tours to eight more countries in January and February," said Frómeta. "One of our more successful ones was in Canada, where we received a positive response in all three cities we visited. We may plan a second visit to consolidate that success, as well as a possible trip to the United

States."

"OCLAE's principle objective over the last five years has been to begin reorganizing the student movement in Latin America, which is uneven in development. This requires experience and discussion," said Frómeta. "This is the first time the congress is open to individuals and groups who are not affiliated to OCLAE. This means more students and youth will get to take part in this important discussion."

Students on strike from Chile, Argentina, and Mexico have been invited to take part.

The opening ceremony of the congress will take place on April 1. Discussions will be organized on topics such as "Gender, Culture, and National Identity," "Environment and Development," and "Neoliberalism and its Application in Latin America." The final session will be a plenary entitled, "Student Movement Strategy Facing the Neoliberal Offensive."

A flyer for the conference says there will also be space for presentations of books and magazines, art exhibits, and video showings. Visits to the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and to the Latin American Medicine School will be organized for participants.

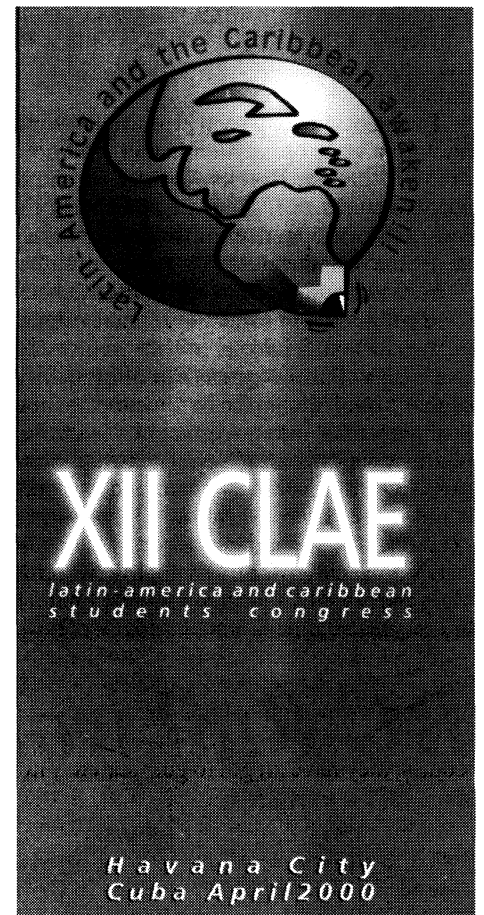
The brochure states, "Three decades ago a

large number of organizations understood the imperious need of joining forces at a continental level to face the common enemy of 'Our America': the imperial American policy." Today, "old and new challenges have emerged for mankind, especially for students and youth."

OCLAE leaders announced the conference last August in Havana, at a meeting entitled "Seminar on Youth and Neoliberalism."

Since then, organizations throughout the Americas, including in the United States, have expressed interest in sponsoring and sending delegations. In December, the National Network on Cuba (NNOC), a coalition of organizations in the United States that oppose Washington's embargo against Cuba, voted to support organizing a delegation. NNOC member groups Global Exchange, the July 26th Coalition in Boston, and the Young Socialists each expressed interest in building a broad youth delegation.

The U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange agreed to organize travel to Cuba, which is not included in the \$70 cost of the conference. Youth and organizations interested in participating in the OCLAE conference can get more information by contacting the July 26 Coalition at P.O. Box 1279, Cambridge, MA 02238, or at the July 26 Coalition website: [www.july26.org](http://www.july26.org);



or by calling or e-mailing the national office of the Young Socialists at (415) 824-1429 or 105162.605@compuserve.com

# Europe rulers balk at U.S. anti-missile system plan

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — After the first successful test of its antimissile system, U.S. president William Clinton will formally announce plans to deploy an antinuclear umbrella by midyear, a plan that enjoys bipartisan support in the United States.

In early December, at a meeting with NATO defense ministers, U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen tried to sign-up Washington's imperialist allies in Europe as partners in the missile shield project. Cohen, citing threats from "rogue states," said, "It is important for our allies to understand that the

threat is real, that it will intensify in coming years, and that it will put their own populations and their own forces at risk.

The U.S. defense secretary told the ministers that the United States was willing to provide them with a theater missile shield that would give them the same kind of protection as the United States.

No government in Europe, however, is willing to take part in the program.

The imperialists in Europe have several concerns about Washington's theater missile shield plans. While they join Cohen's propaganda about "rogue states," which helps them promote an arms buildup in Europe, several ministers said that they were not persuaded the advantages of an antimissile shield outweigh the risks.

Even the new NATO secretary general and former British defense secretary, George Robertson, who has a history of hanging onto Washington's coattails, said European allies had already raised "a number of profound questions" about its potential impact on the alliance.

France's defense minister, Alain Richard, said, "We must be very cautious about a program that could end up damaging our security if it offers indirect encouragement to an arms race."

His comment reflects wider concerns among European powers that the antimissile shield could lead to the abrogation of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty with Russia, an accord that during the cold war balanced the nuclear arms striking capacity of Washington and Moscow. Washington admits its plan is in violation of the agreement.

For example, radar tracking stations in Brit-

ain and Denmark would have to be upgraded to make an antimissile shield function effectively. But that more squarely poses the question of London and Copenhagen having to break the ABM treaty as well.

In addition to citing North Korea, Iran, and Iraq as threats because of their development of long-range missiles, the *Washington Post* reported Cohen saying, "Russia's long-range nuclear missile threat would remain 'robust and lethal' and that China was likely to possess dozens of land- and sea-based missiles with smaller nuclear warheads." This statement, more than the specter of "rogue states," helps point to the main targets of Washington's moves to develop a first-strike capacity.

For London and Paris, the two nuclear powers in Europe, an escalated arms race between Washington, Moscow, and Beijing would marginalize their small nuclear forces and make them more dependent on Washington's military power. It can also make them a target of the stronger nuclear powers, even of Washington.

Since Washington's European allies are close to Russia, they will be the most exposed to the risks of a continental antimissile shield that Washington can retreat behind.

Richard pointed out that the enormous investments Washington's plan would require might be better spent on other military projects. He warned that Russia and China would respond with measures such as missiles tipped with multiple warheads designed to overwhelm such defenses.

Carl-Erik Isacson is a member of the metalworkers union in Södertälje, Sweden.

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—Che Guevara, July 28, 1960  
(from *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*)

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# Socialists discuss politics with coal miners

BY MIKE ITALIE  
AND SHELTON McCRAINEY

After taking a look at the Pathfinder Press title *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, a coal miner and member of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in Morganfield, Kentucky, asked, "Can I get this at Barnes and Noble" in Evansville, Indiana? "That's where I buy my books." Following up on his suggestion, a team of socialist workers changed plans and drove

the 40 miles to Evansville the same day. While no Pathfinder orders were sold at bookstores in town, the team laid the groundwork for a follow-up trip by Pathfinder distributors. And a librarian at the local public library pointed out to us where we could meet farm workers in the region.

Four volunteers from Chicago, Miami, and St. Louis teamed up with others in the Tri-State area of the Midwest to meet, discuss politics with, and distribute socialist literature to hundreds of coal miners, gar-

ment workers, and others in Illinois and Indiana in the final days of 1999.

Nearly 90 of the 100 copies of the *Militant* sold over the course of three days were purchased at coal mines in the region, both union and nonunion. One farmer hauling livestock stopped for a copy, as the team was selling the paper at an intersection near one southern Illinois mine.

Team member Mike Italie approached UMW member Mike Cowan on his way out of work and asked, "What's going on in

the mine?" Cowan parked his truck and stopped for a long conversation on a fight against company demands for concessions. He explained that the bosses are demanding the miners give back a number of sick and personal days before the current contract expires, or face the closure of the mine.

In spite of the combined pressure from the bosses and the union officials to approve this contract, Cowan was glad to report that the proposal had just recently been rejected by a vote of 136 to 127. "We're fighting not just for ourselves, but for those coming 20 years from now," he concluded, "just like the guys in the 1950s set things up for us today."

Garment workers count for an important part of the labor movement in this coal mining region, and the team got out to two sewing plants. One is organized by the United Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) and the other by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union. Lisa Potash, a team member and sewer at a garment factory in the Chicago area, shared experiences with union members at a plant that employs 125 workers. She learned that while few of the shops in the area are union organized, the UNITE local at this sewing plant has remained in place since 1957. Team members set a priority of getting back to the workers they had met to discuss new developments in the class struggle in the Tri-State area and beyond.

## Protests shake up regime in Ecuador

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In the face of mounting street protests and strikes against higher prices and mounting unemployment, Jamil Mahuad, the president of Ecuador, declared a state of emergency January 5 for the fourth time in less than 18 months in office.

Ecuador, a country of 12 million people in South America, is saddled with a \$13 billion debt owed primarily to banks in imperialist centers. The country's currency, the sucre, has dropped more than 70 percent against the dollar over the past 12 months.

After the currency slid another 20 percent in less than a week, Mahuad on January 10 called for replacing the sucre with the U.S. dollar. The president of Ecuador's Central Bank, Pablo Better, resigned in protest. His 15-member cabinet also tendered its resignation. The Social Christian Party, which has opposed Mahuad, announced it would support dollarization.

A coalition of student, labor, Indian, and other political groups said that they would defy the president's ban on protests and begin a general strike January 15. At a news conference, the groups blasted the government's new currency policy as leading to "massive impoverishment."

"The government, the Parliament, the courts, they have all got to go," stated Antonio Vargas, a leader of one of the Indian groups. "Our decision is to pursue this to the final consequences, that all of them go and the Ecuadorean people save themselves."

The conversion rate suggested by the government of 25,000 sucres for one dollar will drastically slash wages. The minimum wage, for instance, would be under \$30 a month, compared to more than double that amount in dollars only six months ago.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced it would be sending a mission to Ecuador to assist President Mahuad in adopting the dollar as the nation's currency. Last September, Ecuador's rulers defaulted

on bond debt payments.

Around the same time, Mahuad promised more severe austerity moves in exchange for getting an IMF loan. Claiming he was undertaking a "modernization of the state," the president, with backing from Congress, plans to sell off state industries to capitalist concerns.

On January 7 workers, teachers, and students marched in Quito against the government austerity programs. The Patriotic Front (FP), an umbrella group that includes unions, students, and community organizations, have announced they will participate also in the general strike called for January 15. Protests took place in Quito, Guayaquil, and Cuenca, with many people injured and dozens arrested by the police. Luis Villacís, president of the organization, said that they not only want the resignation of the president but the entire Congress and Supreme Court members.

Transportation in the province of Guayas was paralyzed as buses and taxi drivers stopped service, preventing many from traveling to Guayaquil, its capital city. Public transportation was not available in Guayaquil itself or to the other provinces. The transportation operators protested against the increase of fees for tolls.

In the meantime, the national police have beefed up their forces in Quito, Guayaquil, Cuenca, and Ambato, utilizing students at their academies. Another 16,000 cops are kept as reserves in their headquarters, ready to intervene. At the same time, small merchants and the FP announced more protests in Guayaquil for January 12.

The indigenous organization CONAIE announced their participation in the days of protest. In Tungurahua, Chimborazo, and Cotopaxi some have decided to block the highways and prevent transportation of agricultural products in preparation for the big mobilization. The indigenous organizations demand a new government and oppose dollarization of the currency. Students from the university in Ambato and peasants joined in blocking highways as part of the protest actions.



Workers, teachers, and students march against the Ecuadorean government.

*We encourage readers to send in stories on sales of 'Capitalism's World Disorder' and other Pathfinder titles. Please send any comments or questions you have about political topics in the book.*

## USWA in contract fight

Continued from front page

proposal on the table, which union negotiating committee head Donnie Blatt called "a slap in the face to everyone who works in the plant."

Blatt said steelworkers would lose \$896 on the new offer compared to that offered at the beginning of contract talks. Profit and gain sharing would be eliminated as would pay for two union officers to work full-time in the union hall.

The company has stepped up its attack on the union with disciplinary actions against workers. A ninth union member has been fired, this time for allegedly vandalizing the doorknob on a supervisor's office. According to Blatt, the company's video merely shows him near the office.

In response to the firing, Local 5274 president Kenneth Cozart threatened to call a strike on Christmas Eve, saying, "We don't want to strike, but the reason why is that the company has begun discharging employees again. Doing [this] over the Christmas holi-

day season, we feel, is pretty heartless."

Union officials also charged Ormet with making preparations to hire scabs and with stockpiling aluminum products in a Massachusetts warehouse. While Ormet bosses denied these charges, a scab recruiter in Mississippi confirmed to the union that he had been approached by Ormet for precisely that purpose.

In a news release on December 17 Ormet threatened to close parts of the reduction plant permanently in the event of a strike. Five days later USWA Local 5724 President Kenneth Cozart announced at a news conference that the union would not strike.

Asked about the decision, Mike Kiggins, one of the fired workers, said, "We haven't gone on strike because of what it would do to the community." Bill Brown said the threat to strike at Christmas was to get the company's attention and "inconvenience the upper echelon and keep them in the plant."

Blatt stated, "We're never going to give up until we get what we deserve. I was here when we took the concessions and I'll be here when we get them back."

The picketing at shift change is spirited. As several hundred cars and pickup trucks pull into or out of the plant, almost every driver honks and waves or raises a clenched fist to the picketers. Trucks and cars passing by frequently join in to show solidarity with the steelworkers at Ormet.

"I've been through 14 contract fights during the 42 years I've worked at Ormet," said E.E. Sole, "and this is one of the best organized, with workers sticking together and the most participation from the younger workers."

Mike Melott, a five-year veteran, explained, "The younger guys see what's happening in the country today. They see the companies are quadrupling their profits while the working man is struggling to keep his head above water. We want to be treated fair."

*Chris Remple is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Susan Anmuth and Salm Kolis contributed to this article.*

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## 400 rally against racist killing in Sweden

Continued from front page

gas, according to Ömar. When they thought the situation had calmed down, Salih turned to leave and was stabbed in the back. After dragging himself 30 meters he fell down.

The family says they called the hospital and were told not to move him since that might make his injuries worse. But it took the ambulance 45 minutes to arrive. Salih died in the hospital later that night.

The police say that the killing was not a racist act, but the result of an ordinary fight that got out of hand. A young man who grew up with Salih rejected the cop's claim. "The killer lives here and is a well-known racist," he said. "He is a skinhead with a swastika tattooed on his chest." The police say the other arrested man painted a swastika with his own blood on the wall of the cell he was placed in.

The murder made front page headlines

in the national papers. The protest rally in the city center was organized by the Turkish Youth Federation. Among the speakers at the rally were the government minister responsible for integration issues, Ulrica Messing, and the Turkish ambassador to Sweden, Oktay Aksoy, who condemned the murder as a racist act and spoke out against xenophobia.

Most participants in the rally were people of Turkish descent, including many who were young. One held a banner, "Today Salih, tomorrow who?" Another sign read: "Where are the human rights?"

Nevin, a young woman of Turkish origin who lives in a suburb west of here, said that she feared "the murderer will be acquitted. They don't take this seriously. Of course it was a racist killing. Who speaks for him?" A young man joined in, adding, "The police are as false as the racists. He won't get

justice."

The murder has also sparked discussion among working people and youth in the city. Pamela Valverde, a member of the Metal Workers Union, came to the rally with three co-workers.

"We have to stand up against this," she said. "It was a wise decision to locate the protest in the center of Stockholm. It's of concern not just for people in Skogås, but the whole nation."

"It gives everybody a chance to take part. I don't know what difference it will make, but to do nothing will certainly change nothing." Another protest is scheduled for January 16.

*Anita Östling is a member of the Transport Workers Union. Claudio Burgos, Lars Erlandsson, and Dag Tirsén contributed to this article.*

# Socialist meatpackers, farm activists meet

## Discuss battles by packinghouse workers, struggles by farmers to defend land

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER  
AND MAURICE WILLIAMS

ATLANTA—Socialists who work in the meatpacking industry met over the January 8-9 weekend in Atlanta to discuss their activities as part of the resistance of working people who are standing up to attacks on their union and working conditions.

A meeting of socialist workers who are involved in actions by fighting farmers took place concurrently. A joint session of the two meetings was held, given the interconnection between the struggles of farmers to keep their land and meatpackers, who face many of the same corporations as farmers do.

Most of the meatpackers at the meeting are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW). A number work in nonunion plants and seek, through joining with coworkers and broader struggles as they unfold, to win union organization down the road.

Over the past year, the number and geographic spread of socialists in this industry has grown, a fact that made the meeting more reflective of the developments in the industry and union, as well as of connections with struggles of other working people in the cities and countryside.

In a report to the joint meeting, James Harris said, "The resilience of farmers who are Black in the fight to keep their land against the concerted effort of lawyers, the Clinton administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and others is a sign of the times." Harris is the farm work director of the Socialist Workers Party and a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE) in Atlanta.

The fight of these farmers is a prime example of the bottoming out of the retreat of the working-class movement, Harris said. While workers and farmers aren't winning more struggles right now, what's changed from previous years is that even out of stalemates and setbacks there are working people who reach out to others in solidarity and who are open to considering broader questions in working-class politics and reading communist books. This shifts the prospects and opportunities for the work of socialists in the unions and for recruitment to the Young Socialists and the party.

Saturday evening participants joined others, including several farmers building the January 17 march in Atlanta, for a forum entitled, "Capitalism's World Disorder and the Prospects for Socialism in the Twenty-First Century," given by Norton Sandler, a member of the SWP National Committee. Gladys Williams, a member of the South Georgia Vegetable Cooperative, introduced Sandler.

### Interest in socialist press

Francisco Pedrón, a UFCW member and meatpacker in Minnesota, gave a report to the meatpackers' meeting. He noted that while there is no broad social movement in packing, skirmishes and resistance abound. For example, his coworkers have purchased 90 copies of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in the recent period at the plant where he works.

This response is one indication of stirrings among packinghouse workers, who are paying for the eight-year economic expansion with "our bodies from the increasing line speed, long hours, and rate of injury."

Pedrón pointed out that "the willingness to fight is not limited to unionized meatpacking plants. There is no less political space in non-union plants. When we start with our coworkers and act collectively, much is possible—from getting through probation successfully to responding to speedup."

He pointed out that the union bureaucracy is prostrate before the bosses' offensive. "Their political course was summed up in the policy of economic nationalism presented in Seattle at the protests against the World Trade Organization meeting," he said, "and it offers no way forward for workers. But the trade union officials don't even stand up to the bosses either in individual plants or against the bosses as a whole."

Pedrón pointed to the need to raise with workers the perspective of revolutionary

struggle to put in power a government of workers and farmers.

Two commissions made up of members of the fraction presented reports to the January 9 morning session of the UFCW meeting. Harvey McArthur, from Chicago, reported for the commission on the campaign to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder*. McArthur described working with a coworker to place the book in the Chicago area and efforts by meat-



Some 400 people joined mass picket in support of 1,200 Teamsters on strike at IBP meatpacking plant in Wallula, Washington, on June 12, 1999.

packers in Des Moines, Iowa, who placed books in grocery stores where Spanish-speaking workers shop. He pointed to the special opportunity to sell the Spanish- and French-language editions of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, which will be available in March. He proposed to extend the campaign for three months, which was approved.

Amy Baxter, a meatpacker in a nonunion plant in Minnesota, reported for the factory committee commission. She opened the discussion by asking, "Do we function differently in nonunion plants?" Baxter pointed to a number of the challenges workers face, from whether to go to company socials and dinners that bosses attend, to how to resist individual negotiations with the boss around issues such as switching jobs and pay raises.

The possibilities to sell Spanish-language Pathfinder books was addressed by Bill Esquivel, a meatpacker in New York. He was part of a team that went to upstate New York where Mexican farmworkers have settled. After some hesitation, the team decided to visit a Spanish grocery store. The manager ended up deciding to take all the Spanish titles they had with them.

Norton Sandler said in the discussion that "the biggest challenge is to do work in the union and through the union structures. This is not easy in the UFCW with amalgamated locals and infrequent union meetings. But we can become competent and function in the union to carry out strike solidarity and other political work."

"In a nonunion plant the road to getting a union is by joining in the efforts and struggles of our coworkers. The union will grow out of the resistance," continued Sandler. "It is the same way the union will be built in a union shop. As we do this work we need to see how to bring the weight of the union to bear in strike solidarity and union battles."

Cecilia Ortega, a meatpacker from San Francisco, pointed to the fact that five members of the Young Socialists were present at the fraction meeting and the particular opportunities that exist for recruitment to the revolutionary movement.

Candace Williams, a meatpacker from Philadelphia, proposed that the meatpackers fraction initiate a team to the area in North Carolina where there is a giant Smithfield packinghouse plant to distribute socialist literature and talk to the workers about prospects for organizing a union. This proposal was passed.

The socialist workers also decided to turn their efforts towards building the January 17

farm protest in Atlanta among coworkers, farmers, and youth.

"There is an abundance of opportunities for revolutionaries to do political work in the countryside," said James Harris at the meeting of some 20 socialists active with farmers. The meeting discussed the party's political work among toilers in rural areas. Participants in the meeting included garment and textile workers, rail workers, airline workers, and

There are also fewer democratic rights, he said. In the small towns, "everyone knows your business" and authorities are "more likely to move on you" for standing up to repressive conditions.

Despite these conditions, the decline in living standards is fueling resistance among the rural toilers. Farmers become radicalized and start searching for allies and an explanation of the causes of this crisis, Harris said. A farmer involved in the protests against racial discrimination by the USDA, for example, purchased a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. He said that before he read the book he did not understand how deep the problem facing working farmers is. Now he is thinking out how to explain to other farmers he works with the depth of the problem they face.

Harris said that other forces are also trying to gain a hearing among farmers, including ultrarightist figures like Lyndon LaRouche and Reform Party presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan. Communists must become familiar with and be able to answer Buchanan's "Family Farm Bill of Rights," he pointed out.

What working people in the countryside must do is fight capitalism, Harris stated. He pointed to the pamphlet by Russian revolution leader V.I. Lenin, *To The Rural Poor*, which presents a program to unite the working class with toilers in the countryside to fight the wealthy class. "Lenin explained that the rural poor are a necessity for there to be a class of rural rich," Harris remarked.

"Our consistent work with these fighters has opened up opportunities to discuss our farm program," said Harris. "The action called by the BFFA on January 17 is not just about the farm question. It can be brought into the labor movement and taken onto campuses. This action will be very attractive to young people and the thousands of farmers who are looking for a way to fight."

By reaching out to farmers and other working people in rural areas, Harris said, "communist workers can meet young people who want to fight the system which is bringing these conditions upon them. These young people will be interested in learning more about the Young Socialists and becoming part of an organized and disciplined communist movement."

Harris concluded his remarks by pointing to the upcoming trip to Cuba by farmers in the United States. They will be hosted by the National Association of Small Farmers.

Some of the farmers see the trip as a break from the past and are internationalizing their struggle. Ideas were discussed such as reaching out to Puerto Rican farmers on the island of Vieques and farmers in Britain. The trip to Cuba opens up more tours, and future trips by workers in the United States become more possible, Harris asserted.

## Retired miners discuss how to resist attacks on health benefits

BY JACK WARD

Members of the United Mine Workers of America's Retiree Leadership Committee met with the union's president, Cecil Roberts, in Washington, D.C., this week to discuss a campaign to save the Coal Act.

"Two presidents and Congress have promised retired coal miners health care for life and it is a promise we expect to be kept," said Roberts in an official union statement. "UMWA members are tired of having to constantly hold Congress's feet to the fire to collect what we are due."

The 1992 Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act, or Coal Act, was established to shore up depleted funds needed to cover miners' lifetime health benefits. All companies that signed a UMWA contract after 1974 are required to pay lifetime health benefits to retirees and their spouses.

Since passage of the 1992 legislation, there have been more than 60 challenges to the law.

In recent years the union fund has been dealt blows by a handful of court rulings exempting companies from paying into the

fund. Some 70,000 retired miners and their families are covered by the union-administered Combined Benefit Fund, set up under the Coal Act.

Mine workers and their union face assaults by the bosses, the government, and the courts. Closures of union mines, attacks on health care and other benefits, and expansion of nonunion operations have decimated the union membership and resulted in harsh conditions for workers in a growing number of coal operations.

The Retiree Leadership Committee was formed in August 1999 to press forward a fight around health care and other issues facing union members. Last fall thousands of UMWA members and their families attended a series of mass meetings to defend their past gains.

Roberts said the meeting in Washington would discuss "a full-blown lobbying campaign to secure Coal Act funding permanently." The statement added that the "union will encourage members to continue their letter writing and e-mail campaign and to attend rallies being planned to publicize the issue."



# Buchanan: sanctions are weapons of war

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"Sanctions have become the feel-good but ineffectual foreign policy of the self-righteous," said Patrick Buchanan on December 16 of last year. He was speaking of Washington's frequent use of economic sanctions against governments and peoples the U.S. rulers oppose.

Buchanan's declaration paralleled his approach to other questions of U.S. international policy. "We are not isolationists," he said on another occasion. "We simply believe in America first, last, and always."

The rightist journalist and politician describes the world more bluntly than mainstream capitalist politicians dare to. Buchanan stares out at a world of crisis, disorder, anti-imperialist ferment in the Third World, and deepening rivalry among the imperialist powers, and formulates a policy to shepherd and employ the brute force of U.S. imperialism.

For more than 30 years, Buchanan was a prominent member of the Republican Party, one of the two parties that dominate capitalist politics in the United States. Last October, he formally broke with the party, launching a campaign to gain the nomination of the Reform Party for the U.S. presidential election later this year.

"In Mr. Clinton's first term, the U.S. imposed 61 unilateral sanctions on 35 countries," said Buchanan. He cried crocodile tears over the horrific impact of the sanctions imposed on Iraq, which lasted throughout the 1990s and remain in place. "More Iraq children have been lost in nine years to U.S. sanctions than all the American soldiers killed in combat in all the wars of the 20th century," he said.

These passages provided window dressing for his real objection: Buchanan opposes the sanctions because they don't work. "Sanctions have failed to remove him [Saddam Hussein] from power," he said. What is more, they have sparked protests against U.S. imperialism.

"Just last month," fumed Buchanan, "the U.S.-imposed sanctions on Afghanistan, because the ruling Taleban [sic] refuses to deliver up Osama bin Laden. But rather than revolting against the regime, the Afghani people took to the streets of Kabul shouting 'Death to America!' They burned our flag.."

Sanctions provide U.S. competitors with an advantage, Buchanan complains. "Even as U.S. sanctions [against Libya] have remained in force," he claimed, "U.S.-made computers, fuel pumps, and drilling equipment pour in from our NATO allies."

"Sanctions have become a way for the United States to vent its anger on the cheap, said the rightist politician. Use them, but use them to deadlier effect, he advised. "If they are to be reapplied, I will understand what the world used to know: that embargoes and blockades are weapons of war."

"Buchanan, In a Change, Calls for End To Sanctions," read the headline of the December 17 *New York Times*. The big business media covered the speech widely. Buchanan expressed a position that, far from sharply breaking with the policy of the U.S. rulers, drew it out to its logical extreme.

In the course of the 1990s Washington has increasingly thrown its economic weight around against its imperialist rivals. At the same time, as their hopes have faded of a relatively smooth and bloodless reintroduction of capitalism and a consequent profit bonanza in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the U.S. rulers have flexed their military muscle in Yugoslavia and elsewhere.

These interventions, and the extension of the NATO alliance to the borders of the old Soviet Union, carry a message to the governments of the workers states, especially Russia. Their meaning is not lost on the European allies and rivals either.

As Washington depends less on the indirect expression of its superiority through alliances and more on directly using its weight as the "one indispensable nation,"--in the words of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright--the bipartisan consensus on U.S. foreign policy that lasted throughout the post-World-War-II period is fraying and tearing. Buchanan's positions represent a bellwether of this growing

divide.

Washington pursues an aggressive trade policy in the Third World and in relation to other developed capitalist powers. It calls for "free trade" while imposing protectionist tariffs and antidumping measures when big business interests here are threatened.

Buchanan states this approach bluntly. "I am not against trade," he wrote in "A Family Farm Bill of Rights" dated August of last year. "I believe we must take aggressive action to open overseas markets to U.S. farm products. But we must stop unilaterally throwing open our markets to Japan, China, the Pacific Rim, and the EU [European Union], when they deny us free and fair access to their markets."

In his "Farm Bill of Rights," Buchanan claims to speak for family farmers who "simply want their labor to be valued, their products to be competitive, and their own government to take their side in the global marketplace."

"I will abolish the IMF and end these taxpayer bailouts of foreign competitors," wrote Buchanan. White House spokespeople have begun calling for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to significantly scale back its lending, especially to Third World countries (see article on this page.)

But while his policies state in a more extreme form Washington's course today, Buchanan is more than just another conservative politician. He sets out to appeal to layers of the middle classes and better-off workers who see the brewing economic and social crisis of capitalism, and sense that instability will turn to catastrophe at some point. He directs many of his rhetorical barbs at the "Beltway elite"--Washington politicians--and at layers of the rich.

This marks Buchanan off from his rival for the Reform Party nomination, Donald Trump, for example. The real estate magnate advocates policies that are also right-wing; however, he is not only wealthy, but brags about the fact.

An article in the *New York Times* describing a Trump meeting says, "He struck a blow for rich people as national leaders, chiding candidates who express pride in their humble backgrounds."

"'They're losers,' Mr. Trump said. 'who the hell wants to have a person like this for president?'"

In contrast, Buchanan's reactionary politics are crowned by demagoguery against the rich and their alleged conspiracies. In a speech deliv-



Ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan announcing break from Republican Party to seek presidential nomination of Reform Party, Oct. 25, 1999.

ered on January 6 he approvingly quoted from *The Revolt of the Elites* by Christopher Lasch. "The old elite, Lasch wrote, had a sense of obligation to country and community. But this new ruling class, more merit based, brainy, and mobile, congregates on the coasts and puts patriotism far down the list in its hierarchy of values."

"For years they [major corporations] have been trying to sever their bonds to the country of their birth," he continued.

"Our Beltway parties have become identical twins," said Buchanan in "The New Patriotism," the speech announcing his break from "lifelong membership" in the Republican Party. "Both supported [the trade treaties] NAFTA and GATT and the surrender of our national sovereignty to the WTO [World Trade Organization]."

"Loyalty to the New World Order is disloyalty to the Republic," said Buchanan. His criticism of unpatriotic elites and "globalists" fits with his call for the erection of a wall between Mexico and the United States to discourage immigrants. All those who do not put "America First" are his targets. The intent and impact of his policy is to divide working people and thereby weaken their struggles.

Buchanan's brand of anti-corporatism has nothing to do with the historic fight of the working class to resist and replace the rule of the capitalists with a government of workers and farmers. It falls into the tradition of national socialist movements that lift their heads as capitalism enters a period of crisis, and shares with them a deep, though coded, anti-Semitism.

Since his break from the Republican party, Buchanan has increased his anticapitalist, national socialist rhetoric. He is freer to seek alliances with other middle class political forces who share his antipathy to the international labor movement.

Last November, Lenora Fulani announced she would serve as cochair of Buchanan's presidential bid. Fulani is a former leader of the New Alliance Party (NAP) a middle class group that over the years developed fascist-like politics.

Buchanan called Fulani "a socialist, an African-American woman." Fulani, who ran as the NAP's presidential candidate and gained nomination in 50 states--something no representative of the labor movement has ever achieved--has posed as a Marxist in the past. But she is no more a socialist than she is a leader of the struggle against the national oppression of the Black nationality. Her politics run parallel to Buchanan's. For example, she expressed her admiration for Buchanan's "great passion for America and ...disgust for the institutions that oppress ordinary Americans."

Buchanan's evolution helps expose the social, economic, and moral crisis of capitalist rule today. Buchanan is positioning himself for the sharpening conflicts between working people and the capitalist rulers that are being prepared today, even as an unprecedented economic boom is cresting above that crisis. The labor movement will need to counter politically and organizationally the national socialist rhetoric, and the anti-labor gangs that such figures will spearhead.

## Washington proposes shift in IMF role

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a major policy speech last month, U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers called for drastically overhauling the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Describing the imperialist-dominated institution as "indispensable," he said, "The IMF needs to be more limited in its financial involvement with countries." He called for the IMF to only lend funds to countries that face short-term currency crises, phasing out long-term lending.

Summers said this change would reflect the new realities in which "the private sector is the overwhelming source of capital."

The IMF, with a staff of some 3,000 and \$90 billion in outstanding loans to almost 90 countries, plays an important role in defending imperialist property holdings and investments, especially in the Third World. In particular, the IMF promotes the prerogatives of U.S. capital.

As a condition for receiving IMF funds, governments must agree to strict austerity measures that target workers, farmers, and some middle class layers. These often include steep budget cuts in social programs, higher taxes, massive layoffs, and the sell-off of state industries and banks to imperialist investors and other capitalists at bargain-basement prices.

The proposal by the U.S. rulers to alter the IMF's role reflects the growing disorder of capitalism, in which IMF demands for austerity in countries such as Indonesia and south Korea have deepened economic turmoil

and led to increased resistance by workers and peasants there.

It also reflects the inability of IMF loan practices to make any headway in overturning the workers states in Russia and throughout eastern Europe.

Summers' proposals were announced shortly before a Congressionally appointed commission which, according to the *New York Times*, was "to recommend eliminating the fund's programs to promote development in poor countries" and loans "that promote the transition of the former Soviet Union to markets."

Washington's proposals have not gone unchallenged. Stanley Fischer, the IMF's deputy managing director, told reporters, "As we reexamine the role of the fund, we must not underestimate what is our bread and butter. Crisis lending is a critical part of what we do."

"The future role of the International Monetary Fund in the global financial system is now under debate," wrote Stephen Fidler in the December 10 *Financial Times*. "At issue is whether Washington will be able to use its 18 percent shareholding in the IMF to continue (as it often has since its inception more than half a century ago) to use the Fund as an extension of U.S. foreign policy."

With the current IMF managing director, Michel Camdessus, due to depart this position in mid-February, the debate over who should replace him is heating up. In the *Washington Post* of January 9, Jim Hoaglund wrote that filling this post "has turned into a

quiet quagmire of subterfuge and rivalry among the world's richest nations."

## Clinton halts access to U.S. by Mexican trucks

The Clinton administration this week denied access into the United States of trucks and buses from Mexico. Under the North American Free Trade Agreement, trucking and bus companies in Mexico were supposed to be able to go anywhere in the United States from January 1. A 20-mile limit from the border is now in force.

U.S. officials claim the right to suspend parts of the treaty, citing safety or health concerns. Mexico has filed a complaint charging a violation of the accords.

Teamsters president James Hoffa has made opposition to the provision a key effort of the union, trying to draw union members into a protectionist campaign. Patrick Buchanan, Reform Party presidential candidate and ultrarightist politician, championed the Teamster official's "protect American jobs" scheme, posing as a defender of workers in the United States against a supposed low-wage threat from abroad. "An American truck driver can't work at a buck an hour the way they have to work in Mexico," he said.

Meanwhile, U.S. trucking companies continue to attack wages and working conditions, and stifle unionization drives.

# Farmers step up actions for Atlanta march

**Continued from front page**  
protest the USDA's racist practices, and are planning to join other farmers and supporters in Atlanta.

A group of seven farmers and farm activists recently met at a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant near Brownsville, Tennessee, to discuss with the *Militant* what's happened to Black farmers in this area since the consent decree settling the lawsuit was approved last spring.

"Not one farmer from Haywood County has been approved," explained Fred Sanders, a former farmer who now works full time as a truck driver. "You have a situation where the local [FSA] county committees are reviewing farmers' files to see whether their claim should be approved.

"They pull out all the 'bad' information about the farmer and send it to Washington," Sanders said. "Meanwhile, the farmers themselves are being denied access to their own files in filing their claims." Sanders was denied farm loans in 1989-90, and forced to file bankruptcy in 1991. "When you file a claim, you have to put your whole farming history in a couple of paragraphs," Sanders said. "But the USDA has access to your whole file."

"I know one farmer who was told that he could just tell his story," added L.V. Jackson, a University of Tennessee extension agent who works in Tipton County. "Then his claim was denied, because he 'didn't provide records.' We're going to Atlanta on January 17, to find out if what's happened in our area is consistent with what's happening to the Black farmers in other states." Jackson is concerned that the word is not getting out that many farmers are having their claims denied.

"The guilty party is selecting who is eligible to have their claims approved," Thomas Burrell added. Burrell is a leader of Concerned Black Farmers and the Tennessee BFAA. At a formal "Fairness Hearing" held last March in Washington, D.C., Burrell and other farmers pointed out that the settlement did nothing to change the county commission system responsible for carrying out decades of discriminatory practices. Now these very same commissions are the ones issuing recommendations on the farmers' discrimination claims, using records that are kept secret.

## 'Quite a different story'

"The letters farmers are getting explaining why their claims have been denied are giving a very different story than what was explained to farmers by the lawyers in the lawsuit," Burrell explained. In the meetings held last year around the country aimed at selling the proposed settlement—known as the consent decree—to Black farmers, the degree to which these local records would be used was downplayed to the farmers, he said.

Those who filed Track A claims, the farmers were repeatedly told, would need only a minimal amount of documentation for claims to be approved. It was one of the reasons, the attorneys said, why farmers should file Track A claims and not Track B. Track A claimants would receive \$50,000 and debt relief, the lawyers said, with a minimum of hassle.

While a Track B settlement held out the possibility of a larger settlement, it would require much more proof of discrimination and more documentation. In fact, farmers have discovered that a lot of documentation is required, even for a Track A claim.

So far, more than 40,000 farmers have requested claims packages. Farmers have returned only 18,000. Of those, few have actually received any payment, and of those, even fewer have gotten the promised debt relief. At a strategy session organized by the BFAA after the December 13 protest in Washington, farmers agreed to push for a six-month extension of the deadline to file claims under the consent decree.

The settlement—far from providing relief to the Black farmers—has become part of perpetuating the long-standing discriminatory practices that over the years have driven tens of thousands of small Black farmers off the land, explained Burrell. "Now that we've found out that we've been lied to, we're trying to figure out what to do. We're committed to fighting this outcome."

In a telephone interview with the *Militant*, David Howard said, "When farmers got the letter of approval on Track A claims, they would go to the local FSA office to see about the relief on their debt. People there would say that they hadn't got notice from Washington yet. Basically, this means you have to give the settlement check right back to them for debt payment. Initially, when we were told

about the consent decree, we thought it and debt relief would help us get our land back, but there's really nothing in there to help us and we see that now."

Howard explains that the market price of cotton is currently at about 38 to 40 cents per pound and beans are receiving around three to four dollars a bushel.

"We need at least 70 to 80 cents per pound to break even on cotton, six or seven dollars a bushel for beans to keep our head above water," he said. "The FSA states for a farmer to raise 100 acres of cotton they would need between 20 and 30 thousand dollars in a year. A settlement of \$50,000 is no money for a farmer today."

Howard, who farms 150 acres, was rejected under Track A. He said the reason the government gave for rejecting him is that he'd been denied a loan because of his "inefficiency," not racial discrimination, as he claims.

In Florida, activists report plans are underway for a car caravan to weave its way northward to Atlanta from the southern tip of the state. Those driving from Miami are planning on meeting some small farmers from around central Florida on Sunday, January 16, at a fund-raising barbecue at Carl Butts's farm in Plant City.

Butts, a small vegetable farmer, is part of a group of U.S. farmers going on a fact-finding

trip to Cuba in February. People in Miami and Tampa are helping raise money so he can go. The announcement for the barbecue says, the "event will also be a sendoff party for farmers and their supporters going to Atlanta for the national day of protest on Martin Luther King Day."

Butts will be attending a technical training session for Plant City strawberry farmers, a number of whom he knows, to get out the word on the barbecue and the January 17 protest.

"As a small farmer who is white, I completely support the ongoing fight of farmers who are Black against the U.S. government," Butts explained. "The policies of the United States Department of Agriculture favor big capitalist farmers at the expense of small working farmers. All small farmers are in this together."

Some industrial workers in Birmingham are finding they have a stake in this fight also. Quinton Earl, a sheet metal mechanic at Pemco and a member of UnitedAuto Workers Local 1155, attended the March 2 "fairness hearing" last year to join farmers and workers in protesting the proposed settlement.

Earl said, "There's more than one reason I am going [to Atlanta]. One is because I feel the small farmer is becoming extinct, especially the Black farmer. I think big business and industry should not be allowed to take farming

over. I believe that's what is happening.

"The second reason is I feel a connection to them because some of my ancestors were farmers. I feel that they lost their land and their livelihood because of misdealings, and lack of support from governing bodies and institutions that were supposed to enhance the quality of farming, but instead they created restrictions and policies that were stumbling blocks."

Eddie Slaughter, vice president of the BFAA from Buena Vista, Georgia, summed the matter up saying, "We are in a David and Goliath situation. The United States government has an economic embargo against Iraq. The United States government keeps a full-scale blockade of Cuba. But that's not enough for them. Now, the United States Department of Agriculture and the Department of Justice are trying to put an embargo on Black farmers in America. Farmers need a sling and five good rocks. It's time for us farmers to develop a strategy and improve our fighting skills." Slaughter will be attending the January 17 event with farmers from his region.

*Susan LaMont is a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Fairfield, Alabama. Bill Kalman in Miami, Ardella Blandford in Birmingham, and Arlene Rubenstein in Atlanta also contributed to this article.*

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### CALIFORNIA

#### Oakland

**Socialist Campaign Rally.** Speaker: Omari Musa, SWP candidate for Oakland City Council At-Large. Sat., Jan. 22, 5:00 p.m. Reception: 4 p.m. *Mosswood Community Center, 3612 Webster St. (near 36th St.). Tel: (415) 282-6255.*

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### Boston

**Russian Invasion of Chechnya and the Role of U. S. Imperialism.** Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party, and member of United Transportation Union. Fri., Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m. *Pathfinder Bookstore, 683 Washington St., Codman Square, Dorchester. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 282-2254.*

### MICHIGAN

#### Detroit

**The Crisis of Capitalism and Prospects for Socialism at the Millennium.** Speaker: Jim Peterson, Young Socialists. Fri., Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m.

### Stop Washington's Assault on Democratic Rights—From Anti-Terrorist Raids to Spy Scares.

Fri., Jan. 28, 7:30 p.m. *Both events to be held at 7414 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (313) 875-0100.*

### NEW JERSEY

#### Newark

**Farmers Battle Sex Discrimination and Fight for Their Land.** Speakers: Anna Marie Codario, Mary Ordille, Mary Visconti, Angelo DeFelice. Sat., Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. *Both events held at 87A Halsey St. Donation: \$4. Dinner: \$10. Tel: (973) 643-3341.*

### NEWYORK

#### Brooklyn

**The Crisis of Capitalism and Prospects for Socialism at the Millennium.** Speaker: Norton Sandler, National Committee member of the Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan 21, 7:30 p.m. *59 Fourth Ave. Donation: \$4. Dinner: \$5. Tel: (718) 399-7257.*

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Philadelphia

**Stakes Rise as Moscow's Assault on Chechen Independence Bogs Down.** Speaker: J.P. Crysdale. Fri., Jan 21, 7:30 p.m. *711 E. Passyunk. Tel: (215) 627-1237.*

### BRITAIN

#### London

**The London Mayoral Campaign: Capitalist Politics and Workers' Resistance.** Speaker: Celia Pugh, member of the Communist League, and member of the Transport and General Workers Union. Fri., Jan. 21, 7 p.m. *47 The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 0171-928-7993.*

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**Stakes Rise in Chechnya for Moscow.** Fri., Jan. 21, 7 p.m. *203 Karangahape Rd. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.*

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# Winning youth to the communist movement

The excerpt below is taken from “So far from God, so close to Orange County,” a report given at a regional socialist educational conference held in Los Angeles, California, over the 1994-95 New Year’s weekend. The report was discussed and adopted by delegates to the Socialist Workers Party’s 38th National Convention, held July 8-12, 1995. The entire talk appears in *Capitalism’s World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

This conference over the New Year’s weekend here has confirmed that new blood is coming toward the communist movement. Earlier today, a leader of the Young Socialists reported to us that a number of young people here have expressed interest in becoming YS members. We have heard reports throughout the conference about the people we meet who want to get involved with us

## from the pages of Capitalism’s World Disorder

in activities in defense of the Cuban revolution, in support of abortion rights, against Prop. 187 and other attacks on immigrants, and around a range of political questions. We have collaborated closely with fellow unionists active in the Caterpillar strike and other labor resistance we have taken part in over the past year.

In all these different ways, we are meeting workers and various young people who get involved in actions, who begin to resist what capitalism is producing. And we find that a growing number of them become interested in broader political ideas and decide to join the communist movement. We should glory in this process. Because it is the heat lightning of much bigger class battles.

Young people are being radicalized. Youth become sensitive to the political, social, cultural, and moral implications of capitalism’s breakdowns earlier than other layers of society. They react to the injustices, and they are ready as individuals to make commitments to do something about them.

The important question for the communist movement is this: How do these radicalizing youth find their way to the working class? This is not a question of class origins. We are talking about how radicalizing young people in general can be won to the working class, not just youth from the middle class. Being born and raised in a working-class family does not by itself bring anybody to the working class *politically*.

Lenin expressed a very radical view that was disliked by some “orthodox Marxists” of his time. He said that students — what we would today call high school and college youth — are going through a period in their lives when their class is not a settled question; they are to some degree determining what class they will be part of. Of course, no one can choose to become part of the bourgeoisie. Wealth and class privilege in capitalist society are passed along through blood lines. The working class, too, is a hereditary class, with only relatively small numbers climbing into the middle class (and even smaller numbers during periods of social crisis like today, with growing numbers from the lower middle class being pushed into the working class as well).

That was not Lenin’s point, however. He was making a *political* point about student youth. He was not talking about the thin, privileged layer being trained in special, elite institutions for their roles in the ruling class. Lenin’s point was that if you take student youth as a whole, in the high schools and universities, those individuals most open to politics are not blocked by their class origins from coming to revolutionary proletarian conclusions if they find the revolutionary proletarian organization.

Even if a young person is open to politics, of course, it is not until they become active that they begin to understand what politics really is. That is, they discover they must decide which class’s line of march is worth fighting to advance. Which class provides effective social and political answers

worth committing their lives to? Which class has the program, strategy, and social power to wipe the filth, the unconscionable relations among human beings produced and reproduced by capitalism, off the face of the earth and begin reorganizing society on new foundations?

It is not unusual, nor should it be surprising, for young people to ask questions about whether workers can actually build a socialist world. In fact, the correct answer is: “No, we can’t; not as we are today. We make no pretense otherwise.”

But there is a much deeper truth, which has been at the heart of Marxism from its origins and which Che Guevara endeavored with such clarity and eloquence to salvage from decades of Stalinist muck. That is, in any true social revolution, workers begin the process of transforming themselves as they collaborate, mobilize, organize, and educate themselves to transform the exploitative class relations they inherit from capitalist society.

That fact is the root of the greatest contradiction that has, since the Stalinist counter-revolution, confronted the workers states in the former Soviet Union, across Eastern Europe, and in China. That is why Khrushchev’s boast “We will bury you!” could only be a reactionary fantasy. Through the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and establishment of the foundations for a planned economy, the indispensable base had been laid for workers to begin collectively transforming themselves and their social relations, becoming thinking human beings of a new type as they advanced the transition to socialism — at whatever pace and with whatever detours the course of the world revolution made necessary.

But thinking, self-acting workers are a deadly threat to any entrenched bureaucracy. And so at the point that economic output in the Soviet Union and across Eastern Europe could no longer be expanded by drawing another layer of rural toilers into the factories, progress began slowing to a crawl. Because only a politically class-conscious and motivated working class could organize under those conditions — outside the domination of the law of value — to advance labor productivity. But a class-conscious working class was precisely what the petty-bourgeois Stalinist regimes could never tolerate, let alone encourage.

### ‘Revolutionize society’

Workers, however, *can* organize ourselves to revolutionize society and begin our own transformation in the process. This is what young fighters, young revolutionists can be won to. As Farrell Dobbs often explained, young people at any time can come to the working class *politically* through the revolutionary party.

What the communist movement has to offer young fighters is not riches, not a powerful apparatus to become dependent on, either politically or financially. What the communist movement has to offer above all are the generalized lessons, the truthful written record, of the experience of the modern working-class struggle over the past century and a half. It is only by reading, by doing the hard work of studying, and then collectively discussing these lessons that we can redeem what others before us have fought for and won, often at great sacrifice. That is the only way we can learn from their successes, avoid their mistakes, and put ourselves and our class on a stronger footing to fight effectively and win.

I think many of us over the weekend were struck in particular by Tom Leonard’s two classes, the one on immigrants I mentioned previously and the one on the unions and the fight against imperialist war. For the majority of us, this was an opportunity to learn from the experiences of a veteran revolutionary worker, from how he personally discovered some of the biggest transformations in world politics as he traveled the seas as a maritime worker during and after World War II.

For many in this room, it was an opportunity to draw lessons from a period of time when you were not yet even on the face of this earth. At the same time, there is also one participant in this conference, Harry Ring, who will soon celebrate his sixtieth year in the communist movement. And we have others here who are well into their fourth decade in the movement, or their third, or their second.

So, the political continuity of the communist movement exists not only through books — nor can it ever, solely — but also through a living web of practical political work and experience. That is why we place such im-



Young people demonstrate against the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in April 1999 in Reykjavik, Iceland. Signs read: “No to NATO air raids – Young Socialists,” “Full rights for war refugees,” and “NATO out of the Balkans.”

portance on forging a cadre and a leadership that braids together these generations and their overlapping experiences and transforms them into a disciplined combat organization and world communist movement.

It is not just youth, not just thinking political workers, who are attuned to the elemental shifts in politics and the class struggle, even before sustained mass action gets going. These rumblings are detected, if not fully understood, by the most alert spokespeople for the bourgeoisie as well. More and more of them are worried by signs that working people are being pressed too hard, signs that unexpected fights may be brewing.

Remember the brief excerpts I read during the discussion period the day before yesterday.... We are breeding a class war, these bourgeois voices are saying, and we must either prepare for it or try somehow to slow it down. But the capitalists can never prepare sufficiently for the uncontrollable and unforeseeable forces their declining system is producing. Moreover, the crisis itself places ever-sharper limits on the concessions they can make to the toilers, if not to slow down the decline then at least to buffer its consequences.

In their own fashion, sections of the trade union bureaucracy sense these changes too. These bureaucrats are social parasites, even if in a different way from the bondholders and other capitalists. The officialdom makes its living by trying to make sure you do what they want you to do, so they can keep collecting your dues and at the same time maintain the backing of their masters in the employing

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

### 25 CENTS THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

January 24, 1975

The FBI maintains 160 agents in Puerto Rico whose sole function is to persecute the proindependence movement on that island of 2.8 million people. This was among the facts revealed by a former FBI employee at a news conference in San Juan at the end of December.

One of the methods employed by the FBI is to send agents into proindependence organizations. Other FBI techniques included illegal mail tampering. Sometimes the FBI would return the letters to the postal system for delivery, but in other cases the intercepted communications would be put in FBI files and never reached their destination.

The FBI also obtained copies of bank records of proindependence groups. The FBI would gather this material through a contact at the main office of Banco Popular.

Among the organizations targeted by the FBI were, in addition to the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, the Puerto Rican Independence Party, the Nationalist Party, the Socialist League, the Puerto Rican Communist Party, and other left-wing groups.

The latest information about the FBI’s activities comes in the wake of a stepped-up campaign of harassment of proindependence militants related to the recently

class. Daniel DeLeon was an old socialist from the turn of the last century who got a lot of things wrong, but among the things he got right was a name for the labor bureaucrats — a name that Lenin loved. DeLeon called them “the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.”

They are ultimately a very weak layer, whose berths will be quickly threatened in the course of any substantial upswing in labor struggles. So out of an instinct for self-preservation, some of them have developed a nose for when class equilibrium is becoming unsettled and things could start getting dicey.

At such times, the officialdom starts reaching out to radicalized workers — including to many like you in this room — to try to get your eyes off the ranks of the working class...

That is why there are few errors worse for class-conscious workers to make right now than to allow ourselves to be drawn into taking responsibility, under whatever guise, for the formal mechanisms of the trade union movement...

Many young people who become sensitive to these changes, however, do so for reasons diametrically opposite to those of the bourgeois commentators or trade union hacks. Young people want to take action against the horrors bred by the capitalist system. And as they do so, some are attracted to a communist workers movement that not only understands and can explain the social and political roots of these horrors, but that looks forward to a good fight and aspires to build on and add to the legacy of all the revolutionary struggles of the past.

concluded strike at the Aqueducts and Sewers Authority.

### THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

January 23, 1950

Truman has given the green light to Robert N. Denham, NLRB General Counsel, to invoke a Taft-Hartley injunction against the embattled coal miners, some 90,000 of whom last week decided not to accept John L. Lewis’s “suggestion” that they discontinue their “rolling” strike begun January 9.

Although the United Mine Workers has not had a hearing before the National Labor Relations Board, Denham on Jan. 18 petitioned the Federal District Court to issue a temporary injunction to prevent the miners from engaging in any action in support of their contract demands which he claims are “unfair labor practices” under the Taft-Hartley Act. Judge Richmond Keech promptly set Jan. 26 as the date for a hearing.

This move brings out into the open the conspiracy of the coal operators and the government to put legal shackles on the miners and deal them a crushing defeat. The “Hate Lewis” mob think the moment is ripe to beat down the miners who have been the spearhead of American labor militancy in the last decade. Then the way will be cleared, Big Business thinks, to “deal with” the other unions, particularly the CIO.

# U.S. Cold War, Cuba's example

The *Militant* encourages our readers to get out the truth about the Cuban revolution. Fighters can answer the slander campaign going on in the context of the Clinton administration's outrageous refusal to return the six-year-old Cuban boy, Elián González, to his own country and to his father.

The editors of the *New York Times* say the "tangled case" should be resolved under federal immigration law. But there is nothing complicated about this issue.

For decades the U.S. government has pursued a policy against Cuba that has included direct military intervention, sabotage, attempted assassinations, and provocations. The U.S. rulers have imposed a draconian embargo on this island nation to punish the Cuban people, who refuse to get on their knees and submit to imperialist dictates.

Cuban General José Fernández answers Washington's propaganda by speaking eloquently to the question of human solidarity and working class morality exemplified by the Cuban people, quoted in the "Discussion With Our Readers" column on this page.

The Cuban people through collective labor provide free medical care and free education up through the uni-

versity level for all the country's citizens. Other measures implemented by the revolutionary government include elimination of U.S.-dominated gambling and prostitution operations, and outlawing of racist discrimination in hiring and social services. The solidarity and respect for humanity learned in Cuba that can be seen in internationalist missions involving thousands of teachers, doctors, nurses, and others who volunteer their assistance to undeveloped nations around the world.

The Cuban road points in the opposite direction of dog-eat-dog capitalism and the brutalities it inflicts on human beings. That's why working people around the world need to condemn Washington, oppose the U.S. embargo, answer the anti-Cuba lies, and demand Elián González be returned to his father immediately.

Class-conscious fighters can use the debate around the case to sell and discuss Pathfinder's newest titles: *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces* and the upcoming *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* as a way to get out the truth about the Cuban revolution. Encouraging young people to attend the youth conference in Havana this April can also aid this effort.

# Working-class 'prison reform'

It was another refreshing look back at revolutionary journalism to find the article published in the *Militant* on the prisoners' rebellion at New York's Attica prison in 1971. Its explanation of the nature of this society, crime under capitalism, and why the "prison reform" we are fighting for is "the fundamental reorganization of society" helps point the way out of the framework put forward every day by liberal and conservative pundits, by Democratic and Republican party politicians, and by representatives of every state institution that exists.

Part and parcel of the wealthy rulers' offensive against the unions, working farmers, and democratic rights is their effort to sow greater divisions among working people, both in the United States and internationally. Criminalizing whole layers of the working class and scapegoating others for the problems created by capitalism are weapons to that end.

Taking on the government's "anticrime" campaign as does Mary-Alice Waters in her article, and answering their propaganda about prisons is essential for working-class fighters today.

The road Washington is traveling and the reality of what capitalism has to offer is graphically demonstrated in the chart of the skyrocketing number of working people behind prison walls. In addition, not only are executions

hitting record levels —President William Clinton's administration has overseen the largest number of any president since the death penalty was reintroduced in 1976 —states are moving to sharply limit the ability of death row inmates to contest the frame-ups and injustices upon which their sentences are based.

It was not accidental, then, that around the same time the proposed \$8 million settlement of the Attica prisoners' lawsuit against New York state was announced, several articles appeared about the suppression of inmates in New York jails who were "plotting [a] prison strike." The *New York Times* reported that "prison guards have reported widespread organizing of inmates in at least three state prisons in preparation for a work stoppage."

Some 85 prisoners accused of involvement were transferred to other prisons. Others found in possession of a letter entitled "Wake Up" were punished or placed in isolation. Another 3,900 inmates were locked down for eleven days —forbidden to leave their cells except for visitors, emergency medical situations, or food preparation jobs.

"Such revolts will recur so long as men and women are put behind bars for disobeying the inhuman laws of this society and struggling against its inequities," Waters writes, "that is, as long as capitalism remains intact."

# Opportunities for solidarity

Opportunities abound for workers and farmers who have been through struggles to join with other battles as they unfold. At the Martin Luther King Day march and rally farmers, strikers at Overnite trucking, and others will be reaching out to win new support from workers and youth. Word of a number of rallies planned this week by Overnite strikers has reached the *Militant*, signaling ways for unionists to step in and back up the determination of the strikers.

Fighters can also respond to the call of the United Mine Workers of America and win backing for their fight to defend the Coal Act, a target of the bosses' offensive against the union and coal field communities. Miners in Nova Scotia need solidarity as well, as they face a government drive to shut down the coal mines, dealing a devastating blow to the entire region.

On many of these battlefronts workers and farmers are taking up questions that have broad social implications, such as the length of the working day, access to health care, getting a living wage, defending the ability to earn a living growing food and fiber, and seeking adequate retirement benefits.

These struggles and questions pose the need to forge fighting organizations out of the unions and other working-class formations, and develop a consistent program in the interests of working people worldwide. Selling, reading, and discussing books such as *Capitalism's World Disorder* is one of the best ways, as we go into struggles and reach out to other fights and skirmishes, to advance the construction of an uncompromising, fighting, and proletarian internationalist leadership.

# themilitant.com — back soon

The *Militant* thanks the many readers who have called from around the world to let us know the problems they have experienced with themilitant.com website.

It's clear that the *Militant* on-line is being widely used. Calls we received were from working people and young fighters who read the print version as well, but like to read at least some of the articles in the day or two between their being posted and the paper's arrival in the mail. Many use the site's simple search engine as they follow up on discussions with co-workers and others, get facts and ideas for a political talk, or get research material to write an article for an upcoming issue of the *Militant*.

The site stopped functioning in the first week of January. In the first days of the breakdown readers entering the address "themilitant.com" in their computer web browser received an error message. Later in the week the problem got worse as readers were met with a site advertising real estate and travel in Thailand. Then for a period all issues

except the current one were available. At the time of writing the prospective reader receives a "web site under construction" notice.

The problem originated with our web site's host company. In the first days of the new year their equipment experienced a massive failure (nothing to do with the "millennium bug"). Some 48,000 customers of the company were affected, including the *Militant*.

"On January 7, the *Militant* decided to move its website from its original host to another hosting company because of these breakdowns," said Peter Link, the *Militant's* web administrator. He began working on the problem as soon as it surfaced.

"However," he continued, "the transition of the domain name 'themilitant.com' has been more complicated than expected." He encouraged readers to access the website at its new location by simply logging on at: <http://209.15.76.84/>

# U.S. rulers and 'human rights'

In the letters column this week reader Jimmy Harkin asks where the *Militant* stands on North Korea and China, and about human rights in those two countries as well as Cuba. He also asks about the death penalty and "gun control" in Cuba. Given the limits of the space available here, this reply will focus on human rights.

The three countries Harkin lists are all ones in which deep-going popular revolutions have taken place. Each involved the mobilization by masses of workers and peasants who fought arms in hand, through strikes and land seizures, and other mobilizations. They each toppled imperialist-backed regimes and established workers and farmers governments. The Chinese revolution occurred in 1947-49; Korea's in 1948. In Cuba the Batista regime

## DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

was toppled in early 1959, followed the next year by the mobilizations that led to the expropriation of the big imperialist holdings.

Washington has sought through wars, economic embargoes, invasions, and political pressure to regain what it lost. The "human rights" card is one it hypocritically uses to justify its interference and attacks.

The 1917 revolution in Russia opened a new epoch of human history—that of proletarian revolution and the advance toward socialism, the next stage in the development of human society. But the tiny super-wealthy minority will defend outmoded and historically bankrupt capitalism with every means at its disposal.

The Cuban revolution is a particularly thorny problem for Washington. Cuban working people have revolutionary leadership; they hold power politically in the country.

The new Pathfinder title *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces* includes a discussion with José Ramón Fernández, field commander of the Cuban forces at Playa Girón, the first military defeat of Yankee imperialism in Latin America.

Fernández gives a concise and convincing answer to the question Harkin asks — a good reason to purchase the book, which contains many other important lessons and invaluable information. The Cuban general says the accusations of human rights violations are "part of a selective campaign carried out by our adversaries to create hostility against Cuba and undermine our prestige. As far as I am concerned, the first human right is the right to live, to receive an education, to live with dignity, to have the possibility of always receiving health care, to a job, to hold a place in society based on one's capacities, technical training, talent, and desires. And to have a right to a country that exists with dignity, as a sovereign nation."

Fernández, though, does not stop there. "Not a single prisoner has been tortured here in Cuba," he says, "not a single person has disappeared—not one, in thirty-eight years. Who among those who accuse us of human rights violations, or who act as accomplices by voting to condemn us, could raise their hand and say the same thing? We do not permit anyone to be mistreated for reasons of sex, religion, or the color of one's skin."

Workers and peasants in China face a different political situation than do Cubans. There, the revolution was distorted from the beginning because of the nature of the Chinese Communist Party. This was discussed at length several weeks ago with a reader who asked why the Chinese government attacks workers on strike (see the *Militant*, January 10, 2000.) Chris Rayson explained that the revolutionary character of the party was destroyed by the scourge of the workers movement, Stalinism, in the late 1920s and 1930s.

Korea is an even more sharply posed situation because it is a country that is literally divided in two, a separation enforced by Washington. It secured this position through the suppression of popular struggles following World War II and a bloody war in which it literally leveled the northern half of the country. The *Militant* backs the struggle for national reunification, a goal advocated by the government of North Korea for decades. A victory in that struggle will push back the U.S. domination of the country, and open up the possibilities for working people there to deepen their revolutionary struggles against capitalist exploitation and national oppression.

From the defense of the system of capitalism—which is the purveyor of the injustices, inequalities, and denials of basic rights the world over—to its outright assaults, including the use of nuclear weapons and wars—U.S. imperialism and its government spokespeople have no moral standing to raise the question of human rights. Our job is to educate about these realities and join the struggles of working people the world over that can change them through following the example of the Cuban revolution.

—GREG McCARTAN



# Overnite strikers in Philadelphia say: 'We'll stick it out'

BY CANDACE WAGNER

BENSALEM, Pennsylvania—"The guys who are out now are strong. We'll stick it out," declared Teamster member Rick Wickham, a driver and dock worker at the Overnite trucking company for 15 years. After 10 weeks on strike "Philadelphia isn't giving in, not until we get a contract," he continued. "We have too much dignity. My wife and I have made a decision. She says 'stay out.' Her father was in the Teamsters union for 40 years."

Wickham and other strikers were joined on the picket line by Teamster members from other trucking companies early in the morning January 3. The strikers organized a bigger line to counter company claims to their customers that the strike would be over by that date.

Teamster members across the country followed the lead of union members in Memphis, Tennessee, and walked off the job October 24 against unfair labor practices by Overnite. Nationally, workers have been organizing for up to 20 years to bring in the Teamsters union for 8,200 dock workers, drivers, and maintenance workers.

On the line in Bensalem, a key issue in the organizing campaign is equal treatment for all employees. "Here they practice 'selective kindness,'" stated Bob Sheppard, a driver at Overnite for 14 years. Discrimination is practiced in assignment of equipment, routes, and load assignments, as well as in overtime and work rule enforcement. "One day they tried to send me home because I had the wrong hat on," Sheppard explained. "It was because I'm a union supporter."

At the Bensalem terminal efforts to organize into the Teamsters union began in late 1994. By the end of October union supporters had signed up 75 percent of the 120 eligible workers and a union election was set for February 14, 1995, explained Sheppard. "After the cards were signed, four or five of us began to wear union shirts and buttons. Pretty soon half of the workers were wearing them. That was when the company started to break the law," he said.

Management told workers that if the union was voted in the terminal would close, laid off Teamsters would come take their jobs, and truck routes would be sent to other cities. Four days before the election, the



Militant/Candace Wagner

Teamsters at Overnite picket line in Bensalem, Pennsylvania, January 3.

company gave all those voting an unscheduled 55 cents per hour pay raise.

After losing the election by a vote of 59 to 46, union supporters brought a complaint against the company to the National Labor Relations Board. Workers presented testimony about company intimidation and board members awarded the election to the union. They ordered the company to bargain with the Teamsters for a contract. This order is still under appeal by Overnite. Unionists at 12 other Overnite terminals are in the same

situation.

Teamsters in the Philadelphia area have donated money and food to the strikers, helped them find work with union trucking firms, and staff the picket line. Jim Milligan, retired from 32 years as a driver for Consolidated Freightways, is a volunteer organizer for the Teamsters and organizes the Overnite picket line. "This strike is very important to other Teamsters," Milligan explained. "If we lose this, it will affect other terminals. It will have a big impact."

## Why inmates rebelled at the Attica state prison

This past week New York State offered \$8 million to settle a class-action lawsuit for its murderous assault and brutalization of prisoners at Attica state prison in 1971. Then Governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered a military force including CH-34 Army helicopters to retake the penitentiary in wake of a prison rebellion. They left 43 people dead and more than 300 wounded. We are reprinting below excerpts from an article by Mary-Alice Waters, first published in the October 1, 1971, *Militant*. It was later printed in the Pathfinder pamphlet, *Attica: Why Prisoners are Rebelling*, by Derrick Morrison and Waters. The pamphlet contained "The Attica Prisoners' Demands" and a list of the prisoners who died. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Since the rebellion at Attica was brutally crushed on September 13, 1971, thousands of articles have been written about the prisons in this so-called free society. And volumes more will be written in the weeks and months to come, as countless politicians, journalists, and professors of sociology and criminology try to explain—often vainly—the roots of the "problems" with the "correctional system."

The most reactionary and racist commentators simply attempt to justify the Attica massacre with the assertion that the men caged up there are criminals—i.e., guilty of acts defined as crimes by our "free" society. They are, therefore, not like "other people." They are "uncivilized," "antisocial," and if they are treated like animals, it is because they are, after all, subhuman.

But millions of other Americans were struck by the elementary justice of the demands for which the Attica rebels were willing even to die. They were stunned by the brutal inhumanity of the murderous state officials. And they are trying to understand what

happened at Attica.

One of the recurring topics in the post-Attica commentary on the prisons has been the "new mood" in the prisons, the emergence of a supposedly new kind of inmate. As Steven V. Roberts of the *New York Times* commented September 19, 1971: "A 'movement' paralleling those that have arisen in recent years among Blacks, students and women has now begun to emerge in the nation's prisons."



A number of aspects of this new political consciousness, militancy, and unity point towards the deeply revolutionary implications of what is happening in the prisons today. Many of the observers on the scene at Attica commented on the militant class solidarity of the rebels, on the unity in struggle among Black, Puerto Rican, and white rebels, and the apparent absence of racial conflict among them. *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker commented with obvious astonishment: "That prison yard was the first place I have ever seen where there was no racism." But equally significant was the fact that it was unity under predominately Black leadership. The composition of the leadership reflected not only the prisons of this country, the reality of race and class oppression, but the depth of the Black radicalization as well.



Every improvement in the physical surroundings, every victory that gains a few more human and civil rights for society's victims, will help make life just that much more bearable for them. But even the most humane prison is still a prison and the reason there will be more Atticas is lodged in the very function of prisons in this capitalist society. Such revolts will recur so long as men and women are put behind bars for disobeying the inhuman laws of this society and struggling against its inequities—that is, as long as capitalism remains intact.

What does this society define as a crime? Almost all "crimes" are acts which violate the sacred right of private property upon which class society rests—the right of the few to control and benefit from wealth that belongs to all. "Crimes" are acts which break rules set up to guarantee the rights of a small handful, their right to condemn the masses of humanity to misery, exploitation, disease, starvation, and death—if it is profitable. The fact that the targets of "criminal" acts are most often the poor themselves only attests to the success of the rulers in setting the victims of class society to prey upon each other. Even murder, rape, and other "crimes of violence" can ultimately be traced, almost without exception, to the social inequalities and distortions of human potential and character that are rooted in capitalist society.

The prisons of this country exist for one reason—to try to terrorize people into accepting an inhuman, irrational social system based on maintaining the "rights" of the few over the majority. Once capitalism is eliminated, once it is replaced by a system which can provide abundantly for the needs of the many rather than the profits of a tiny handful, once we have eradicated all the distortions of human potential which flows from this inhuman system and the institutions that prop it up, there will be no need for prisons. The very social system that has created and defined crime will have been eliminated.

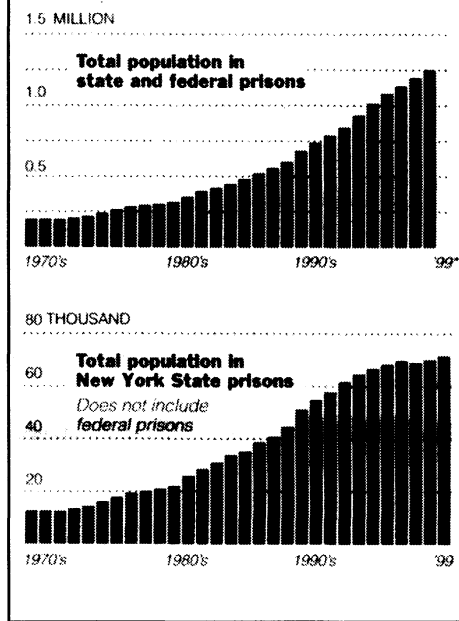
But only a revolutionary upheaval strong enough to take power out of the hands of the Rockefellers and Nixons and place it in the hands of the most oppressed and exploited—the workers, the prisoners, the Black and Brown communities, the women, the draftees—only such a fundamental reorganization of society can bring about the necessary changes. That is the "prison reform" we are ultimately working for...

The names of the individuals who struggled and died at Attica and San Quentin and in the

other prisons of America will go down in history alongside the names of men like Malcolm X as heroes of the masses in the coming American revolution.

At the time of the Attica rebellion there were 198,000 people in federal and state prisons. By the middle of 1998 that number had risen to 1.2 million. Another 600,000 people were locked up in local jails. There were 12,500 prisoners in New York in 1971. Today the number is approaching 72,000.

The number of people thrown behind prison walls grew between 1997 and 1998 by 16.7 percent in Mississippi; 14.8 percent in North Dakota; 13.4 percent in Wisconsin; 12.3 percent in Vermont; and 11.6 percent in Oregon.



## — LETTERS —

### Human rights in Cuba

Tell me something. Where do you stand with North Korea? and China? And since Cuba has the death penalty and gun control where do you stand on those issues? Just curious. I've been told not just by the media but by other folks that Cuba has a huge violation of human rights and China and N. Korea the same. Fill me in.

Jimmy Harkin  
Cary, North Carolina

### Great WTO coverage

Great coverage of the WTO pro-

tests. I could not wait for the next issue of the *Militant* to read the truth about what the WTO really is. It is often the pages of the *Militant* that prepares me for discussions with my coworkers and friends.

Gary Willhite  
Los Angeles

### Irish taxi drivers strike

I was recently in Ireland and was able to follow some political developments. Taxi drivers went on strike protesting the government's decision to increase the number of taxi licenses. Taxi drivers in Dublin went

out for 24 hours, affecting 30,000 people.

Despite the fact that Ireland is supposed to be a European tiger, workers can't get along on wages of about 200 Irish pounds a week and many families can't pay the rent.

Lasse Erlandsson  
Stockholm

### Reduced rates for inmates

The *Militant* offers reduced subscription rates to workers and farmers behind bars. A six-month subscription to the *Militant* costs \$6, and one year costs \$12. We send a free

sample copy on request. Free complimentary subscriptions are sent on a first-call first-served basis according to budgetary constraints.

Contributions make these special rates possible for those who cannot afford regular rates. Please send your donation to: Militant Prisoner Fund, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

### Labor news in the Militant

The *Militant* stays on top of the most important developments in the labor movement. It has correspondents who work in the mines, mills,

and shops where the events are breaking. You won't miss any of it if you subscribe. See the ad on page 2 of this issue for subscription rates.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

## Clinton administration uses boy in campaign against Cuban revolution

BY RACHELE FRUIT

MIAMI—The Clinton administration continues to use Elián González, a six-year-old Cuban boy, as a political hostage in Washington's decades-long campaign against the Cuban revolution.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service said January 11 it will not move to return the child to his father in Cuba, despite a statement a week earlier that they would abide by established laws and send the boy back by January 14. The INS said at the time that Elián's father "has the sole legal authority to speak on behalf of his son."

The Clinton administration's refusal to release the boy has provided the framework for an anti-Cuba campaign by Democratic and Republican party politicians, the big business media, and rightist organizations. Each portrays Cuba as a place where individual freedom is suppressed by a police state.

For example, Judge Rosa Rodriguez of the Miami-Dade Circuit Court here gave Elián's great uncle temporary custody until a court hearing March 6. She wrote that his petition "contains sufficient verified allegations that if emergency relief is not granted and Elián is returned to Cuba he would be subjected to imminent and irreparable harm, including loss of due process rights and harm to his physical and mental health and emotional well-being." No evidence supporting that assertion was provided.

### Judge orders father to appear

Rodriguez also ordered Elián's father, Juan González, to appear at the March hearing, adding that his "failure to appear may result in a decision adverse to his interests." González has asked the U.S. Council of Churches to act as intermediary and bring his son back to Cuba, stating he would not travel to the United States.

U.S. Attorney-General Janet Reno on January 12 brushed aside this Florida state court's ruling, but opened the door for further delay by saying that any legal challenges must come in federal court. She did not say what steps the federal government might take to enforce its decision to return Elián to Cuba.

Vice-president Albert Gore added his voice to the anti-Cuba campaign, stating his support for the judge's ruling. "This child's mother died in an effort to get her child's freedom," he said.

President William Clinton simply responded, "Anybody's free to express their opinion on this," as if Gore is not a top government official. Clinton has hypocritically claimed his administration is not letting politics enter into its decisions.

But it was widely recognized in the media and by U.S. government officials that the

INS and the Justice Department can simply ignore the judge's ruling and return the boy to Cuba.

Elián's mother, and 10 of the 14 other people on a boat, drowned when the ship sank as they were crossing from Cuba in an attempt to reach Florida.

The Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 gives Cuban refugees the right to permanent resi-

The *Times* added a display quote, "Castro's Cuba is an unfit home."

In a protest held in Cardenas, Cuba, Ricardo Alarcón, president of the National Assembly of Cuba, reminded the crowd that Burton was the co-author of the 1996 Helms-Burton law, which reinforced the economic blockade of Cuba.

"[He is] the cosponsor of the annexationist

Washington has failed to win public opinion on the question of keeping Elián in the United States.

"There are just a few people and they are not representative of the Cuban community," said Eduardo, a Cuban engineer who lived in Miami for seven years. "It is just a group who yell and who have the news media on their side."

The events around Cuba and the deportation of 393 Haitian, 16 Dominican, and 2 Chinese immigrants to Haiti by the U.S. Coast Guard in early January have opened a wide-ranging discussion here on the reasons for the widely different government policies.

### Two children deported to Haiti

A Haitian woman was detained in the Krome Detention Center here because she was sick, but her two children were deported to Haiti.

"The solution to such injustice is not opening the process to all who reach U.S. territorial waters," wrote columnist Carl Hiaasen in the *Miami Herald*. Openly anti-immigrant, he continued, "For the seas would fill with flimsy boats and tragedy upon tragedy would follow. The solution is to make a fair law that applies equitably to everybody and to quit playing favorites."

Another *Herald* columnist, Robert Steinback, wrote, "I sympathize with the more than 400 Haitians who crowded onto a barely seaworthy ship. But, he continued, "They want political asylum from a democracy [in Haiti]?"

"The United States committed its money and military might to restoring democracy to Haiti in 1994—a mission I enthusiastically supported." He added, "I doubt many would qualify for political asylum in any case."

Not everyone agrees with this analysis. Gerald Lacrete, Jr., a Haitian American who lives in Miami and travels to Haiti on a monthly basis, told the *Herald*, "The former militaries still carry guns and they still kill ordinary people. There is no security there—the people don't go out after 6 p.m. for fear of being killed."

In a letter to the editor, Lea Bracha wrote about the deportations, saying, "The hypocrisy is so blatant, and the disregard for human rights obvious.... Nobody is running in the streets of Havana with guns, and people do not disappear in the middle of the night. The only reasons they [Cubans] have for coming is to better themselves financially, the same reason the Haitians have, but the need in Haiti is so much more pronounced and urgent than it ever was in Cuba."

The Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami-Dade County, Rollande Girard, has been getting out her views amidst these events, including at several protests of the deportation of the Haitian refugees.

"Washington attacks Cuba because working people there made a revolution, took back their country from U.S. domination, and expropriated the holdings of the giant U.S. corporations," she said. "They have waged a military, economic, and propaganda war against Cuba ever since."

"These are the same companies and their government who exploit and dominate the people in Haiti. They are the same who discriminate against immigrants and who attack our union and democratic rights here," she continued.

"I urge all who are defending immigrant rights, fighters in the labor and farm movements, and student youth to explain and defend the Cuban revolution," Girard said, and "demand Washington end its campaign and return Elián to his father, and fight to stop the deportations now!"

Rachele Fruit is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1126.



Cartoon from the *Miami Herald* takes note of lack of public support for right-wing demonstrations demanding Elián González be kept in the United States. The actions were 'called off' after several days. But the propaganda campaign against the Cuban revolution continues unabated.

dency one year after being paroled from INS detention if they arrive on U.S. shores. If picked up at sea they are returned to Cuba, according to current U.S. law.

While the Cuban government allows anyone to go to another country that accepts them if they so choose, the U.S. government limits legal immigration from Cuba, encouraging illegal and hazardous trips across the Florida Straits.

Other moves include U.S. Rep. Dan Burton issuing a subpoena requiring the six-year-old to appear before the House Government Reform Committee on February 10. Burton said he wanted to prevent the INS from removing Elián.

In an opinion column in the *New York Times*, Cuban American Harvard professor George Borjas wrote: "Elián's father may be an exemplary parent. But he cannot divulge his true aspirations.... If the father could talk freely, we suspect that he too would choose to migrate to the United States."

law that among other things causes suffering and deprivation to our children," he said.

In Miami, following the INS decision to return the child to his father, Cuban right-wing organizations, helped by TV and radio stations as well as the main newspapers in the city, built protests aimed at traffic slowdowns and stoppages. Even the Spanish radio stations, which normally play only music, publicized the protests.

In spite of public statements of support by Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas and other politicians, fewer people than expected showed up.

From a few dozen to several hundred people blocked some streets and the entrance to the Port of Miami. Longshoremen on their way to work yelled at the protesters, and many workers disapproved of these tactics.

The poor outcome of the mobilizations shows the weakening of the Cuban right-wing organizations in Miami and the fact that

## Workers strike Quebec radio and TV station

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ  
AND ALEXANDRE GEOFFROY

MONTREAL—The 1,300 members of the union of technicians and artisans of Radio-Canada's French network (STARF) struck the company January 3. Radio-Canada is a government-run radio and television network.

Ninety-one percent of the STARF members participated in the strike vote in mid-December. Eighty-eight percent of them gave their union a strike mandate. Roughly two-thirds of STARF members work in Montreal, the rest in other parts of Quebec and in New Brunswick. Almost all of them are French-speaking, either Quebecois or Acadians.

Job security is the key question in the strike, as Radio-Canada is pressing to contract out most work. The company also seeks to undermine job classifications, forcing workers to do a variety of jobs.

The union is demanding that the more than 25 percent of the work force that are temporary workers gain permanent status more rapidly. One lighting technician on the picket line said he is still temporary after seven years, as there is no limit on how long a worker can remain in this status. Radio-Canada does not guarantee these workers 40 hours a week or recognize their seniority rights in job assignments.

Workers are also incensed by the fact that Radio-Canada is offering them less than what technicians of the English sector ended up accepting after a six-week strike last year. "Is a French worker worth less than an English worker?" asked STARF in one recent statement. "In the last eight years my wage has gone up by 8 percent," said Alain Champagne.

Workers are picketing five-days a week, four hours a day. Up to 200 workers are on the

picket line on weekdays.

The strike at Radio-Canada has the support of several other unions in the broadcasting industry. Champagne underlined, in particular, the support from the technicians of the English network. While on strike last year, these workers set up picket lines that STARF members respected in front of a hockey game at the Montreal Molson Center.

Workers on the picket line are preparing for a long strike. "This is not a strike about pennies. It's the future of Radio-Canada which is at stake in this strike," said one of them.

Michel Dugré is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Montreal. Alexandre Geoffroy is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers in St-Blaise-sur-Richelieu, Quebec.